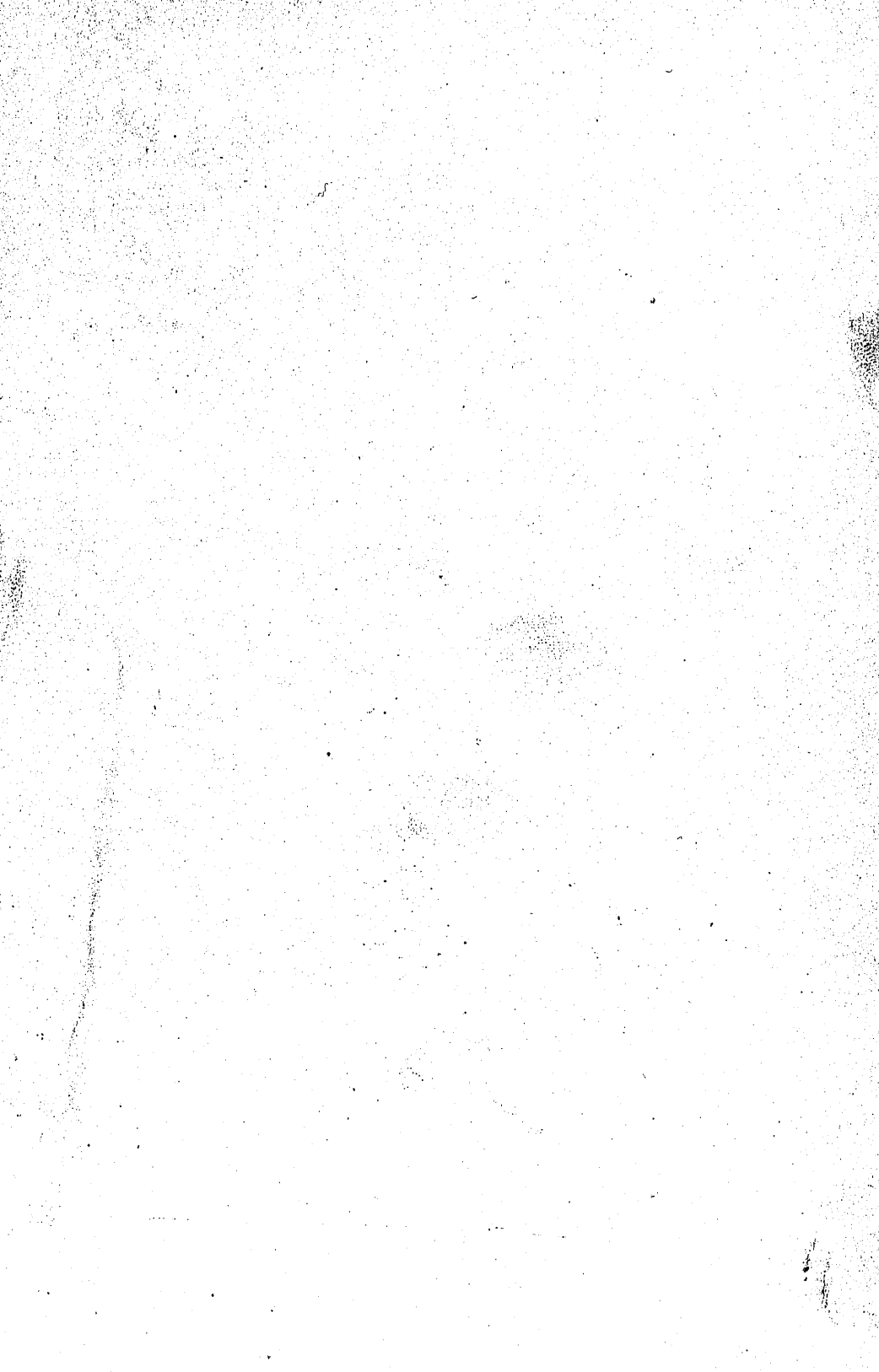
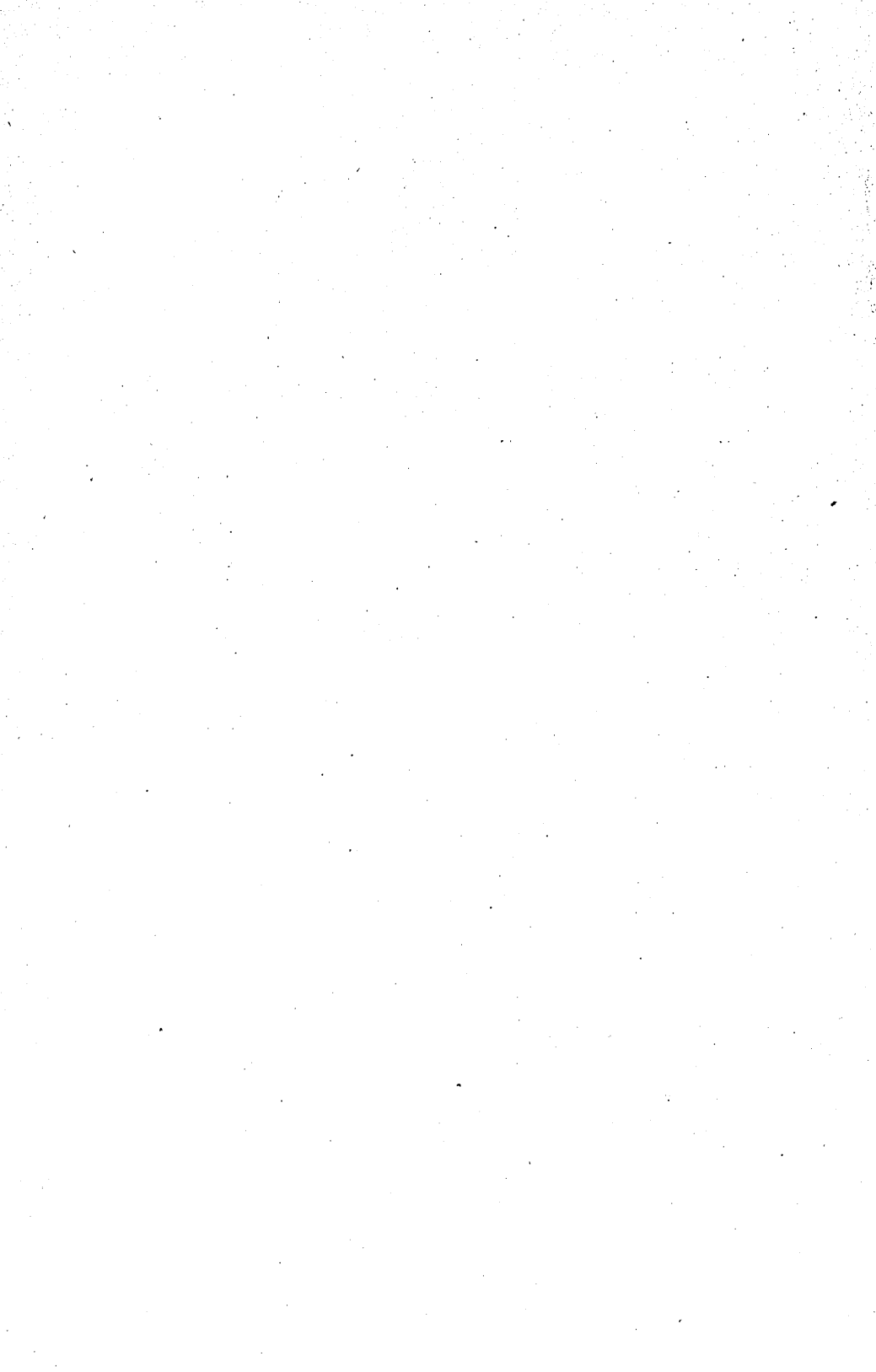


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# RELIGION AND CIVILIZATION

THE CONCLUSIONS OF A  
PSYCHIATRIST

BY

WILLIAM HIRSCH, M. D.

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## PREFACE.

A truly scientific investigation of important historical events requires the coöperation of all the various branches of science. Psychology, anthropology, archeology, philology, geology, even astronomy,—all must contribute their share in raising the veil in which the early events of history are shrouded. A science the eminent significance of which in the correct understanding of certain historical phenomena is not yet sufficiently appreciated, is that of psychiatry. Since earliest times mental diseases have exerted an enormous influence on the development of mankind, and there are a great many historical events which cannot be understood at all without a psychiatric explanation.

The biblical accounts, both those of the Old as well as of the New Testament, have generally been considered the absolute truth until modern natural science placed itself in opposition to them. An irreconcilable contradiction has developed between those old fundamental religious doctrines and modern science. Every attempt to bridge over this chasm had but the opposite result. In the vain effort to reconcile the biblical accounts with the generally acknowledged natural laws, one resorted to a radical remedy for cases of this kind: one denied the actual existence of the persons and events in question, considering them merely as the product of mythological poetry.

At first there were only the individuals of the Old Testament, such as Father Abraham and his equals, whom one tried to transform from historical personalities into mythological figures. Of late, however, one approached even the person of the "Saviour," whose "divinity" is in discord with the fundamental laws of nature, placing his personality too in the domain of poetry. Denying the actual historical existence of Christ, one began to speak of a Christ-myth.

In discussing these subjects one must always bear in mind that the only reason for a mythological interpretation of the biblical accounts was the inability to bring them into harmony with the results of modern natural science. There is no other reason for such an assumption. If it were not for the "divine revelation" nobody would think of considering Abraham a mythological hero, the Bible offering the character of mythological poetry in no other respect but merely that of a historical work.

Even more arbitrary than the mythological interpretation of the Bible is a theory according to which those persons in question did really exist, but their lives have been adorned with all sorts of imaginary utterances and actions. Such a method, which, according to requirements, accepts the one thing as truth and calls the other invention, must be repudiated as thoroughly illogical, and also owes its origin to the inability to remove the contradictions between the phenomena in question and modern science.

The answer to the question, whether we have to deal with facts or imaginary creations, must, therefore, turn out quite differently, if we succeed in explaining the biblical accounts scientifically.

The solution of this problem forms a part of this book. The biblical phenomena are given a complete and exhaustive explanation by the assumption of mental diseases, such as are described here. Through them the Bible is divested of its mysticism, and thereby attains a so much greater value as a source of historical events.

The ultimate object of this book, however, does not consist in discussing the question whether the biblical accounts are true or not. If it could be proven positively that they are not true, that Abraham, Moses and Christ never lived, we should not need to give this subject any further thought. The monotheistic religions would, in that case, not be based on any stronger evidence than the doctrine of the Greek and Roman Gods. It is the supposition that those characters from Abraham to Christ did live and did act, as stated in the Bible, which calls for a scientific explanation. It is this supposition, therefore, on which

the discourses in the corresponding chapters are based. In them we assume the biblical accounts to be true in every respect, in order to show by a psychiatric explanation that even in that case there can be no question of a "divine revelation" or a "period of miracles."

After having subjected the biblical characters to a psychiatric analysis, we, then, may go one step further. Through the assumption of mental diseases we do not only obtain a scientific explanation of those mystical phenomena, shrouded in impenetrable darkness heretofore, but through them, at the same time, we obtain the absolute proof that the entire biblical accounts, those of the Old as well as of the New Testament, are based on undeniable facts. All those persons in question, such as Abraham, Moses, Christ, etc., must actually have existed beyond any doubt. It is possible, of course, that slight errors may have occurred in the relation of the various events or in the assertion of their chronological order, but that is of no importance to us. What concerns us is the description of the psychical condition of the various persons, and in this respect there cannot possibly be any misrepresentation or even invention. The utterances of Christ, as they are related by the four Evangelists, must certainly have been made by him, and a mythological origin of them is as impossible as is that of the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Testament.

The proof of the actual historical foundation of all those persons is furnished by the following facts:

Mental diseases, like all other phenomena of nature, have quite a typical, to the expert unmistakable character. To invent a psychical condition, corresponding in all its details to the actual course of a well-known mental disease, is just as impossible as to describe the course of typhoid fever or malaria without ever having seen or heard anything of these diseases. The description given in the Bible of the persons in question corresponds so accurately to a certain form of insanity which we have occasion to observe every day that the proof that these people must have existed has hereby been presented beyond any doubt.

We can arrive at the same conclusion by the opposite way of reasoning. We know that mental diseases like the one in question must have existed at all times in history, without, however, having been recognized as such. If we stop to think how such cases must have manifested themselves in ancient times, and what impression they must have made on their contemporaries, those biblical phenomena will immediately present themselves as the inevitable result of these conditions.

A certain reluctance which presented itself to my mind regarding the publication of this book arose from the question whether it is wise to deprive the people of old "ideals," inherited from generation to generation, without being able to replace them by a satisfactory equivalent.

In discussing this subject one must bear in mind that with regard to this particular question it makes no difference whether one considers the biblical accounts mythological poetry, or whether one recognizes in them the product of mental disease. Both views equally destroy the foundation on which the monotheistic religions are erected. If one fails to recognize the "revelations" of God in the Old Testament, and the divinity of Christ as absolute facts, one deprives the monotheistic doctrines, and Christianity in particular, of their foundation. To him who doubts the truth of the biblical accounts, the monotheistic religions must necessarily collapse, having no other proof to offer than the mythological tales of the ancient "heathen" nations. The recognition of the mental diseases to be discussed hereafter can, therefore, destroy no more ideals than does the theory which regards the biblical phenomena as mythological products. To him who takes a skeptical view of this matter, it can only be of interest to investigate the true origin of these doctrines and to explain the biblical phenomena strictly scientifically.

As to the religious "ideals" themselves, it is a further purpose of this book to deduce from strictly historical facts what real value they possess, and what influence they exerted on the development of the human race, and especially on the progress of civilization. Regarding the results ob-

tained by these investigations, the corresponding chapters may speak for themselves.

It is not the purpose of this book to destroy ideals, but to raise our voice against a deeply rooted, inherited superstition, which for thousands of years has kept humanity in iron bonds, and at all times has formed the greatest obstacle to the development and progress of civilization. May the kind reader approach the book in this spirit. In cases of a difference of opinion, let cool and strictly logical arguments, instead of sentiments of an offended faith, decide. Problems like those in question cannot be solved by emotions and feelings, but only by purely intellectual processes.

WILLIAM HIRSCH.

New York, May, 1911.



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# RELIGION AND CIVILIZATION.

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## I. THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION.

Religion is a phenomenon common to every people on the face of the earth. No matter how low a grade of civilization it may have attained; certain religious views and practices are to be found in every tribe or nation. Long before the slightest signs of culture are manifested by a people, traces of religious phenomena can be observed.

The causes for this phenomenon, common to all tribes, no matter how they may differ as to race, climate, and environment, are manifold.

The law of causality innate in the human mind, by which every act as well as every object has its cause and its purpose, has brought every race, as soon as it became at all capable of thinking, face to face with the question: Who made the earth? How did we and everything about us originate? The answer to this importunate question must naturally prove the more naïve as it is put with greater precision and insistence.

The law of self-preservation, arousing in people the fear of death, is unquestionably responsible for the belief in a life after death, in another world or "hereafter," in which "immortal souls" live on. Such a belief offers consolation for the loss of dear ones, as well as alleviation and a lessening of the fear of death. With this idea of a life after death was combined the belief that in the "hereafter" the good would be rewarded, the wicked punished.

From these views the idea of a Deity gradually developed; that is, the idea of higher beings, who govern the world and observe and protect the lives of each and all human beings. No act remained hidden from the Deities;

every thought buried in the depths of the human soul was known to them. The Gods held the fate of mankind in their hands; they could formulate all coming events, punish or reward, according to their feeling toward or against the individual. By prayer and sacrifice it has always been deemed possible to influence the favor of the Gods. From this belief gradually developed the widely different forms of divine worship, ranging from the silent meditation or prayer of the solitary devotee to the magnificent and imposing ceremonies in temples and at altars.

Different as the religious ideas of nations may be, in certain essential points they are alike. Everywhere we find the eternal, the almighty Deity, watching over the fate of mankind, guarding the life of each individual and decreeing his destiny. In every nation there is firmly implanted the belief in a life after death, in divine reward and punishment.

The character of the people, the degree of development and culture it has achieved, has had the greatest influence on the formation of its religious ideals. Almost everywhere we find the belief in one supreme God, to whom other gods owe allegiance and obedience, whose wishes and commands they execute. Individual Gods are nearly always representatives of natural phenomena, whose sublimity and mysteriousness the human imagination has transformed into Deities. Thus we have Gods of light and darkness, a God of Heaven, of the sun, the moon, the earth; Gods of the sea and of rivers, etc., etc. But it was not only the conditions beyond man's own being, the wonderful phenomena of nature unfolding themselves before his startled gaze, which were transformed into Deities by a fascinated and dazzled imagination. Man's own qualities, his psychical attributes, the emotions and sensations that permeated his soul, were used as symbols to be deified and worshiped as Gods. Hence we find Gods of love and of hate; Gods of revenge, Gods of household peace, of marriage, of war, of commerce, of agriculture, of art, of song—in short, everything pertaining in any way to man, be it a phenomenon of nature or an emotion that thrills the heart, everything was raised by man to a divine power and worshiped accord-

ingly. Thus we see that the Gods did not create man, but on the contrary, that it is the human mind which created all the Deities of the various nations.

The greater the civilization of a people, the more ingenious the representation of their Gods, the more poetical their symbolization of natural phenomena, the more intelligent their apotheosis of psychical qualities.

The vegetation of the earth, flowers and plants, gardens and farms, every blade of grass owes its existence to the sunshine, the pearling dew and refreshing rain. Translated into the poetic fancy of Greek mythology, this would read something like: Zeus, the God of Heaven, married Demeter, the Goddess of earth, and of this marriage was born Persephone, the symbol of vegetation. The change from summer to winter is poetically expressed by the divided home of Persephone, who spends half the year in the nether world with Hades who had abducted her, the other half returns to her mother, Earth.

Hephaistos, the God of fire, is hurled by Zeus from the Olympus to earth; the fire of the earth originated in Heaven. Eros, the God of love, cannot grow nor thrive without a companion, therefore his mother gives him a brother, Anteros. Unrequited love cannot bring happiness, but breeds sorrow and despair.

Such is the origin of the various myths. The religious views of all nations, no matter how different in form and content, owe their origin to similar psychological processes. Just as the functions of all the organs of the human body, those of the heart, the kidneys, the liver, etc., are the same in the people of all nations and races, so are certain fundamental phenomena of psychical life common to all human beings. It matters not whether it be the Asiatic Mongolians, the North American Indians, or one of the civilized peoples bordering the Mediterranean Sea, the before mentioned psychical phenomena which led to the formation of religious observances are common to all of them.

The origin of religion, therefore, depends on the psychical mechanism of man. Just as the law of self-preservation has made warriors of the men of all nations, battling one

against the other for supremacy, just as the sexual impulse has everywhere brought about the same results between the sexes of all nations, just as, in consequence of the same psychical mechanism, families, societies, and states have been formed, so certain psychical processes, common to all human beings, have produced religious phenomena. It is, therefore, no mystical or supernatural process that is at the bottom of religion—the human Psyche is not “one part of divinity,” as metaphysical explanations put it; religious phenomena are merely the inevitable result of a necessary process of the human mind.

## II. PARANOIA.

The psychical processes described in the foregoing chapter, which led to the same results among all nations, that is, to religious ideas whose chief characteristics were alike, were the products of a normal mentality. The very fact that these psychical phenomena were of the same character and led to the same results among people of vastly different races, shows plainly that we are dealing with normal psychical phenomena, and not with products of diseased intellects.

Nevertheless, diseases of the mind play as important a role in the domain of religion, as they do in all other manifestations of the development of civilization.

One disease of the mind in particular has always been of enormous importance in its bearing on the social and political development of nations; one which in former times, when it was not yet even recognized as a disease, exerted an influence of the greatest significance and importance on the general progress of mankind. It is essential to a proper understanding of what is to follow, to have an approximate idea of this disease of the mind, called Paranoia, and it is therefore necessary to give a brief description of it before going further into our subject.

Although this form of insanity is as old as the human race, it is, nevertheless, only a comparatively short time since its manifestations have been recognized as those of a disease. As late as the eighteenth century, persons suffering from this ailment were deemed anything but sufferers from a disease, and it was only in the nineteenth century that the peculiar phenomena attending it began to be properly understood.

What makes this disease appear so remarkable, particularly to the layman, and so difficult for him to accept its

manifestations as those of a mental disturbance, is the fact that the intelligence of the person in question is not necessarily impaired. Sometimes these people show an unusually high degree of intelligence and are often gifted and talented. They do not present any of the symptoms which the layman is accustomed to look for in the insane. They do not speak incoherently, do not chatter irrelevantly, do not act absurdly, have no attacks of fury, do not smash windows and mirrors, etc. No, nothing of all this. Apparently they are well-bred persons, who not infrequently make a decidedly favorable impression by their charm of manner and speech; their judgment on most subjects with which they are conversant, seems to be entirely correct; they experience and feel as others do; and yet what a multitude of morbid psychical phenomena lies hidden under this seemingly normal mental condition.

Paranoia is a chronic, incurable disease, which, as a rule, persists throughout the entire life of the patient. The chief characteristic of paranoia is the existence of delusions, either alone or combined with hallucinations.

A delusion differs from an error, committed by a normal person, inasmuch as that the former does not originate like the error by false perceptions or wrong conclusions, but that it is produced within the brain, probably as the direct result of a corresponding emotion. This is the reason why the delusion cannot be removed by any manner of argument, while a physiological error is corrected as soon as the cause of its origin is removed. The attempt to correct a delusion always has the opposite effect, the person concerned clinging the closer to his delusion, and the most exhaustive arguments and efforts to show him his error only lead to new and more complicated delusions. The delusion is usually either one of persecution or of grandeur. Very often these types exist simultaneously. Any thoughts and ideas in any way related to the contents of the delusions, are governed and influenced by them; on all other subjects the patient reasons and judges as correctly as any perfectly normal person.

For example, let us imagine a person who is obsessed

by the belief that he is pursued by enemies, while there is not the slightest foundation for such belief. This idea, which at first, perhaps, played only a subordinate role in his psychical life, gradually grows more and more pronounced until finally all his thoughts are influenced by it. Everything that goes on around and about him is correctly perceived, but is always interpreted under the influence of this idea. People passing him on the street, and sending a cursory glance at him, have "looked at him peculiarly," have at once "recognized" him, for "a description of his personality has been published," so that more and more people should be drawn into the conspiracy against him. Any article in the newspaper is, of course, directed at him. Every trifling occurrence is brought in relation to his person. Accidentally the coffee tastes somewhat bitter. The suspicion is at once aroused that poison has been put into the food so as to get rid of him. Everywhere he sees himself pursued by enemies, and fears secret attacks on his life, until he finally calls on the police to protect him. Should he be rather abruptly sent about his business, or perhaps even ridiculed, he immediately concludes that the police are also engaged in the plot against him. There remains only one thing for him to do, to arm himself so as to be able to defend himself against his enemies. Not infrequently this leads to actual murder, which these patients commit in good faith as a necessary self-defense.

In other individuals the paranoia from the very beginning assumes the character of delusions of grandeur. Already as children, patients of this kind consider themselves destined to perform great things in the world. Sometimes they claim to be an adopted child. "My parents," said a paranoïcal boy, "were only my foster parents." If the truth were known, he would be found to be the son of some great personage, perhaps of a prince or even a king. He has a great mission to fulfill in this world. Without him his country would go to ruin. He has been chosen by providence to save it. Or God himself has destined him for great things. Perhaps he is even of divine origin. Here, too, as in the case of delusions of persecution, all external



events are interpreted under the influence of his morbid ideas. The smoke rising in a column from the chimney yonder, is a sign to mankind that their Savior has come. Flags and banners, displayed in the street for any reason, are intended for him, people recognizing in him a distinguished person. Announcements in the newspaper, as for instance the notice of a political meeting, are intended for him; he is to be chosen as leader of this or that great cause.

According to the intellectual capacity of the individual, the delusions are gradually connected with each other; they become classified and systematized until an apparently logical structure of delusions has been erected. We frequently find delusions of persecution and of grandeur simultaneously, in which case all possible combinations may take place.

To argue or discuss with such persons, to try to convince them of the absurdity of their delusions, is not only useless, but invariably leads to the directly opposite result. Tell a paranoiac, suffering from delusions of persecution, that his ideas and deductions are based on an error, and he immediately concludes that you are in the plot against him, and are only trying to lead him into a wrong track.

In all things which are not under the direct influence of their delusions, paranoiacs may appear perfectly normal. They can carry on a logical conversation on any subject within the scope of their intelligence and education; they can even, if they have artistic or other accomplishments, become ornaments to their profession and useful members of the society in which they move.

According to the condition and predisposition of the psychical organ, the disease may remain confined to the delusions and the actions resulting from them, or the morbid mental condition may also affect the various apparatus of perception in such a way that those things which previously were only a matter of a morbid imagination now are also perceived with the senses; that is, are actually seen or heard. In other words, we may have to deal with hallucinations. perceived with the senses, that is, are actually seen or heard. organs of sense, where there is no external stimulant to

produce such perceptions. If a person hears a voice, whose words he distinctly distinguishes, where in reality there is no such voice, where as a fact there is no external acoustic stimulant as a foundation for this perception, we have to deal with a hallucination of hearing. In like manner there are hallucinations of all the senses. If a person thinks that he sees a certain person in an absolutely empty space, nay, if he believes that he sees this person as distinctly and definitely as we see a really existing object, he suffers from a hallucination of sight. Various hallucinations can of course take place simultaneously. The patient may see a person, may hear her voice and carry on a regular conversation with her; he may touch her and feel her and perceive the odor of a perfume emanating from her.

A hallucination is, as a rule, the materialization of a pre-existing delusion. A person suffering from delusions of persecution suddenly hears "quite distinctly" some one in the street calling him names. These hallucinations of hearing become more and more frequent and intense. While originally the patient believed that he heard only single words, he now hears whole sentences that are directed towards him. He begins to react on them, and answers the voices he seems to hear. Thus he is soon engaged in a conversation with these imaginary persons. They abuse and threaten him; he tries to repulse them. They inform him that he is soon to die; he tries in every imaginable way to defend and save himself.

Where we have to deal with delusions of grandeur, the hallucinations assume a corresponding character. Instead of threats and abusive language, the patient hears words of subservience, nay, even of reverence or adoration: "Hail to the hero, who has come to save the country," "this is the son of the prince." Addresses like these also occur only occasionally at first, as in cases of delusions of persecution, but gradually assume larger and larger dimensions. The patient who considers himself destined to perform great things, communicates with his imaginary voices as with intimate friends, who become his confidants and counsellors.

Before every enterprise he asks these voices for advice and obeys their commands conscientiously.

The contents of the delusions and hallucinations depend on the degree of education attained by the individual, on the environment in which he has grown up, and the conditions and ideas of the time and place in which he lives.

A fact that still remains to be mentioned is that most paranoiacs, in the carrying out of their delusions, show an energy and persistence which is seldom, if ever, displayed by normal persons.

During their entire life they chase a phantom regardless of the difficulties that may beset their path, without ever thinking of abandoning the hazardous and often useless struggle. Their delusions act as a continual stimulant, as an inexhaustible source of strength and endurance. It is this type of men which constitutes the so-called fanatics, who have existed in all fields of human endeavor.

This is a very brief description of paranoia, that peculiar disturbance of the mind, whose enormous influence on the course of history and the development of civilization has not yet been sufficiently appreciated, neither in the past nor in the present, in spite of our advanced psychiatric knowledge.

It is self-evident that the brief account of this condition which it has been possible to give at this point, cannot give the laity a comprehensive or complete idea of paranoia. Nevertheless, it may suffice to aid even the inexperienced to understand what is to follow.

### III. MONOTHEISM.

As has been repeatedly emphasized in the first chapter, the religious views of the different nations are the natural consequence of the normal psychical mechanism of man. The law of causality which attributes cause, effect, and purpose to every object and every occurrence, the instinct of self-preservation which produces in man a constant fear of death, a certain love of justice which calls for revenge, reward, and punishment, these are the chief components of the human psyche on which are based all religious notions. It is for this common cause that we meet the same fundamental ideas everywhere, only clothed in different garbs. Whether the supreme God be called Zeus, Jupiter, Wotan or Vishnu, and whatever may be the legend accounting for the origin and character of the Gods, the quintessence of all these religions remains the same. Independently of these polytheistic ideas which are to be found in a more or less developed form among all the primitive tribes as well as in those highly civilized people of ancient time, originated the doctrine of "the only and eternal God," the doctrine of Monotheism in contradistinction to the so-called "heathen" Polytheism.

While the legends relating to the Gods of the various nations developed gradually among the people, and can not be traced back to any particular person as their individual originator, we have positive records and accounts of the origin and further development of Monotheism. This doctrine can be traced back through four thousand years, and shows us a single man as its actual author. According to those accounts "the only, eternal God" revealed himself to this man called Abraham, and his descendants were selected by "the only, eternal God" as his "chosen people,"

events are interpreted under the influence of his morbid ideas. The smoke rising in a column from the chimney yonder, is a sign to mankind that their Savior has come. Flags and banners, displayed in the street for any reason, are intended for him, people recognizing in him a distinguished person. Announcements in the newspaper, as for instance the notice of a political meeting, are intended for him; he is to be chosen as leader of this or that great cause.

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### III. MONOTHEISM.

As has been repeatedly emphasized in the first chapter, the religious views of the different nations are the natural consequence of the normal psychical mechanism of man. The law of causality which attributes cause, effect, and purpose to every object and every occurrence, the instinct of self-preservation which produces in man a constant fear of death, a certain love of justice which calls for revenge, reward, and punishment, these are the chief components of the human psyche on which are based all religious notions. It is for this common cause that we meet the same fundamental ideas everywhere, only clothed in different garbs. Whether the supreme God be called Zeus, Jupiter, Wotan or Vishnu, and whatever may be the legend accounting for the origin and character of the Gods, the quintessence of all these religions remains the same. Independently of these polytheistic ideas which are to be found in a more or less developed form among all the primitive tribes as well as in those highly civilized people of ancient time, originated the doctrine of "the only and eternal God," the doctrine of Monotheism in contradistinction to the so-called "heathen" Polytheism.

While the legends relating to the Gods of the various nations developed gradually among the people, and can not be traced back to any particular person as their individual originator, we have positive records and accounts of the origin and further development of Monotheism. This doctrine can be traced back through four thousand years, and shows us a single man as its actual author. According to those accounts "the only, eternal God" revealed himself to this man called Abraham, and his descendants were selected by "the only, eternal God" as his "chosen people,"



to whom he promised all sorts of preference and advantage. To all other nations of the earth, this God is said to have shown a dislike, and to harass and annihilate them was deemed a pious act by his "chosen people."

This Monotheistic doctrine, which, as just said, can be traced to Abraham, has gained the victory over all other religious doctrines, and is today the common religious belief of nearly all civilized nations. Even though the original doctrine of "the only eternal God" later on underwent some modification, inasmuch as this "only, eternal God" had a son and a sort of comrade in the form of "a Holy Ghost," still the "Father" always remained the same old God, who several thousand years ago had many confidential interviews with a number of old Jews. In spite of this new addition of the "Son" and the "Holy Ghost," the doctrine of "Monotheism" has been retained, the great discovery having been made, that "Father, Son and Holy Ghost" added together make only "one," and not "three," as we in our ignorance may be inclined to suppose.

It now becomes our task to ascertain how far the doctrine of Monotheism formulated four thousand years ago, and generally accepted, even today, can be brought to agree with our modern scientific views.

Our present knowledge of the world, with all that lives and flourishes therein, is naturally fundamentally different from the conception our forefathers had of it. At the time when the Greek Gods governed the world, only a small part of the earth was known, and this small fraction of our planet constituted the whole world in the eyes of mankind. The sun, moon, and stars were merely attendants of this world, and it was their duty and purpose to serve her. Man, therefore, saw in himself the actual Lord of creation, for of all that he saw and knew he himself was by far the highest and most complete being, and everything else in nature existed for one purpose only, to make life as agreeable as possible for him. The earth was the "habitation" of Man; animals were created to serve and nourish him, the purpose of the sun and moon was to furnish warmth and light for the home of Man.

Today we know that the earth represents only an infinitely small part of a system, whose center is the sun, gigantic in its proportions when compared with the earth; that this entire solar system, that is, the sun with all its planets and satellites, is only an atom in the great Universe, that there are innumerable solar systems besides, and that all the solar systems which we can perceive with our limited organs of sense taken together again represent only an atom in the great Universe. What, then, is one individual human being? How ridiculous must be the views in consequence of which man regards himself as "lord of creation." How vain the belief that the world was created for him!

The philosophers of olden times regarded the so-called human soul as something entirely independent of the body. The body was, so to say, the external hull of the soul, enabling it to manifest its properties. This dualistic view gave rise to all conceivable speculations. Thus originated the doctrine of transmigration of the soul, in consequence of which the soul existed in other bodies before it entered the human body, and would after death again migrate to another organism, in order to attain at last a certain degree of perfection. The old Indians believed that the human soul traveled through good and vicious animals to cleanse and purify itself. The Egyptians were of the opinion that after the death of the human body, the soul passed through the entire list of animals in regular order until finally, after three thousand years, it returned to the human body. The Greeks, too, believed in the transmigration of the soul. The Pythagoreans taught that, after death, the soul went down to Hades; but that after dwelling there for some time it entered the bodies of other human beings or even animals until it was sufficiently purified to return to the original source of all life. Even Plato propounds the doctrine of soul transmigration. According to his teachings, the soul, in its migration from the human to the animal, searches for such bodies as correspond most perfectly to its original character. Thus tyrants become wolves or vultures, diligent, industrious people, bees or ants. At the time of the

birth of Christ, the Jews believed that God had created only a limited number of Jewish souls, who, therefore, as long as there were Jews, must travel from one to the other, and only occasionally, as punishment, would be transposed into animals.

The doctrine of the independence of the soul survives even today. Why, this very doctrine is the *conditio sine qua non* of all religions. Of course, they do not believe in the naïve manner of the transmigration of the soul, as taught by the old philosophers, but they still believe in the life of the soul after death, and particularly, as is taught by the Christian religion, in a reward of the good in Heaven, and punishment of the wicked in Hell.

In contrast to this, the doctrine of the materialism of the soul made itself felt already in ancient times. This doctrine did not deny the independence of the soul, but did away with all the mystical notions of immateriality. It remained for our modern natural science, however, to destroy completely the metaphysical idea of an independent human soul. We know today that there really is no such thing as the "soul." What we understand by this name "soul" is a number of heterogeneous functions of the central nervous system, which are governed by just as precise and rigid laws as are the contractions of the muscles of the heart or the secretions of the cells of the kidneys.

It would be entirely beyond the scope of this work to try to prove the above statement by scientific facts. Whoever is in doubt on this question and desires further information, must turn to the extensive literature bearing on it, and by exhaustive psychological studies acquire a clear judgment about this subject. Here we must confine ourselves to emphasizing the well-proven fact that the doctrine of the human soul, as an independent entity of the body, is absolutely irreconcilable with the present state of natural science, and with this knowledge the entire doctrine of divine reward and punishment after death falls to pieces. Natural science recognizes neither Heaven nor Hell.

We know today that between man and animal there are only differences of degree. The human "soul" is no more

immortal than that of the rabbit, and man, who once upon a time dared to consider himself the lord of creation, is of no more importance in the great scheme of the Universe than the worm in the dust. The recognition of this fact is one of the greatest accomplishments of natural science. The anthropocentric view, according to which all the phenomena of Nature existed merely for the benefit of man, filled the world with the most frightful superstition, and proved itself the bitterest enemy of progress in the history of culture and civilization.

Scientifically, therefore, the doctrine of an immortal and independent soul has for some time been definitely disproven, and still the past belief in a "hereafter," in a "reunion after death," "in reward and punishment in another world," is today as common among the so-called educated classes as among the masses. Of course today no one would dream of believing in any of the various forms of the transmigration of the soul as they were taught in ancient times, but if one accepts the doctrine of an independent, immortal soul at all, why not believe that the soul migrates from one human body to another, or even to that of animals? The one idea is as logical or as illogical as the other, and from the viewpoint of our modern natural science these views must appear equally absurd.

Thus it becomes evident how the entire aforementioned views, upon which religious belief among the ancients was built, gradually lost their ground. Natural science awakened us to the knowledge that the world was not "created" in the religious sense of the word. Psychology has shown that the law of causality is only a manifestation of our own psychical mechanism, having no actual existence in nature. Furthermore, we have recognized that there is no immortal soul, independent of the body, that on the contrary our psychical manifestations are nothing more nor less than the functions of our central nervous system; that, therefore, a life after death is absolutely out of the question, and the belief in divine reward and punishment is merely based on traditional superstitions.

With all the other superstitions the doctrine of the Deity,

must also fall to pieces. It matters not how one may picture the Deity to one's self; all these ideas are diametrically opposed to natural science and constitute nothing but an old superstition handed down from generation to generation.

That people are so sincere and fervent in this belief, the so-called "educated ones" blinded to its scientific contradictions and impossibilities, is entirely due to habit, inheritance and education. Should a person, today, suddenly be asked to believe that Zeus and Heres are enthroned in Olympus, surrounded by the other Gods, that every human thought is known to the immortal Gods, that the Gods demand human sacrifices and decree the destiny of every individual according to their inclinations, he would undoubtedly repel the idea with scorn, and no one with the least scientific education could be induced to acknowledge such a belief. Our doctrine of the "one eternal God" is not only precisely as unscientific and impossible as the old Greek Mythology, but is, apart from its being incompatible with all science, even much more improbable and banal than the charming symbolical creations of the idealistically and poetically inclined Hellenic people. How can a sensible human being believe for a moment that one isolated individual being can exist in the world through all eternity? This "only, eternal God" must have been bored to death long ago. He would be more to be pitied than any one else in the whole world. What more dreadful can be imagined than an only and eternal being? Even the fact that this "one eternal being" had a son and that a third rather mysterious being joined these two, could not have alleviated, very markedly, the ennui from which the old gentleman must have suffered, for these three added together are only one instead of three, so that a mutual interchange of thought between them was a matter of impossibility.

Were we to give all the scientific reasons which prove the impossibility of the existence of a personal Deity, we could fill folios, for the existence of a God, as pictured by religion, is in direct contradiction to every acknowledged scientific fact. On the other hand, if we ask on what the

belief in "the only, eternal God" is based, if we ask what causes the greater portion of civilized men and women of today to cling to the belief in this same "Almighty God," we will at once be met with the answer from all sides that the "only, true God" revealed himself to Man so and so many thousand years ago, that he himself proclaimed his omnipotence and handed down his laws and commands to Man.

These so-called "revelations" are the only "proof" of the existence of "God," while on the other hand every scientific fact contradicts it. We shall, therefore, in the following discussion of this subject, have to investigate the true nature and character of these "revelations," we shall have to find out whether their reports are based on actual historical facts, and, if this be the case, whether and how they are to be reconciled with the present state of science.

#### IV. "THE REVELATIONS."

As has already been pointed out, there is a vast difference between the manner of the origin of Polytheism and Monotheism. The theological doctrines of the ancients, no matter how much they may differ in form, all have this in common, that certain phenomena of nature, as well as celestial bodies, were personified as divine beings, and as such were revered by them. Furthermore, not one of these religions can be traced to any particular author. Indeed, they developed gradually among the people, and have been maintained and amplified through being handed down from generation to generation.

The history of Monotheism is altogether different. The author of the doctrine of the "only, eternal God" was a man who lived in Chaldea, and whose name was Abraham. This notorious and far-famed Abraham is the author of the doctrine which constitutes the fundamental principle of the most widespread religion among all the nations of the civilized world today.

Abraham is described by the old historians as a man of unusually keen intellect. He was deeply interested in the phenomena of nature, and had a comprehensive knowledge of mathematics and astronomy, whatever may have been understood by these terms in those times. Through his observations he was led to believe that all celestial bodies, as well as all natural phenomena of land and sea, served a common purpose, and were governed by common laws. For this reason, he continued to deduce that individual celestial bodies could not be independent, exerting their own will and energy, but were necessarily only the tools of a higher power. These deductions led him to the assumption

of an individual personal God, in contradistinction to the many Deities of his time, each one of which represented some particular phenomenon of Nature.

As all new ideas, particularly those in the realm of religion, are apt to be met with the greatest opposition, so at this time the worthy Chaldeans were wrought to the highest pitch of excitement by the utterance of such blasphemous doctrines, which threatened to rob them of their old inherited Gods. But, as is usually the case, the greater the opposition, the more earnestly and emphatically Abraham insisted on his new doctrine, which by this time occupied and controlled his thoughts and actions to such an extent that one fine day he actually heard the voice of his God. This voice commanded him to leave the country in which he, "the only, eternal God," had been grossly insulted, and go to Canaan. He heard the "voice of God" more and more frequently. It promised great benefits to him with regard to his descendants and his own future. "I will bless those who bless thee, and curse him who curses thee." Obviously "God" had chosen him; Abraham, from among all others to reveal himself, for no one heard the "voice of God," except he, the "chosen one." Therefore Abraham, "at the command of his God," moved, bag and baggage, to Canaan, a country which "God" presented to him and his heirs.

When, shortly thereafter, a famine set in, Abraham with his wife moved to Egypt, this being the only place where, under the circumstances, food was to be had. Here he feared that, because of the beauty of his wife, his life might be in danger, and therefore passed her off as his sister. And, indeed, the beauty of his wife was brought to the attention of Pharaoh, who invited her to his court and made her one of his concubines. Abraham received great riches in cattle and slaves, from Pharaoh, as a gift in return for his sister. But when Pharaoh discovered that Sarah was Abraham's wife, he sent for him, reproached him for his falsehood, and then generously dismissed him with his ill-gotten gains.

Hereupon Abraham returned to Canaan, where "God"



blessed him anew and promised him an enormously large posterity. "All the families of the earth should be blessed in his seed." From this time forth, in everything he did, Abraham was guided by the direct command of God, with whom he was in continual communication.

After Abraham, who, by means of his wealth, had acquired a numerous following, had been successful in a number of battles, God gave him his sanction and made him new promises, of which a vast descendancy always formed the main factor. "As innumerable as the stars in heaven" should his descendants be.

Until now Abram, whose name God had changed into Abraham as a reward, had always listened to the commands of "God" and acted accordingly. Now he began to talk to God, so that regular discussions took place between them. Abraham complained to God of his grief that he had no direct heir, and must therefore leave his earthly possessions to the son of his servant, upon which God assured him that he would yet have a son of his own. Thereupon he asked of God a sign or token that would convince him of the blessing in store for him, and God commanded him to sacrifice a heifer, a she goat and a ram, each three years old, also a turtle-dove and a young pigeon. This Abraham did, and after he had made a "bargain" with God, fell into a deep sleep, during which God "revealed" to him that his descendants must dwell four hundred years in a strange land, that God would then punish the oppressors of his descendants and lead the latter into the promised land. As a token of his divine presence, "God" sent a smoking furnace and a burning lamp among the sacrificial animals.

When Sarah still remained childless the couple decided that Abraham should try with a handmaid of Sarah's what she herself had not been able to accomplish, and so it came to pass that Abraham begot from this handmaid a son, Ishmael. But when later on Sarah did have a son of her own, Abraham drove the maid with the child into the wilderness.

Thereupon God made a new "bargain" with Abraham. God agreed to protect him and his descendants, who

were to be extremely numerous, and to give them the land of Canaan as a present, in return for which Abraham and his male descendants, as well as all male slaves, were to be "circumcized." Whoever was not circumcized should not share in the blessing of God; thus all the male members of the house of Abraham were circumcized.

Not long afterwards three "angels" visited Abraham and told him that God had decided to destroy Sodom because of the wickedness of its inhabitants, whereupon Abraham turned to God, reproaching him for his great injustice and explaining to him that it would not be seemly for a "judge of all the earth" to destroy the good with the wicked. "The only, eternal God" repented and promised to spare Sodom if he could find fifty honest men. Abraham bargained with him until he reduced the number first to forty-five, then to forty, thirty, twenty, until finally God agreed for the sake of ten honest men to spare the city.

When Abraham arrived with his wife in Gerar, he behaved just as he had done in Egypt, inasmuch as he again deceived the king about his wife, representing himself as her brother. As he had acted towards Pharaoh, so he now acted towards King Abimelech, accepting generous gifts for "the sake of his sister." But "in a dream" God revealed to Abimelech the truth about Sarah, that she was the wife of Abraham, a great prophet, to whom he must return her or suffer death.

One fine day Abraham heard the voice of God commanding him to sacrifice his son Isaac on the altar. Obedient to this command, Abraham was in the act of plunging the knife into the heart of his son, when the "voice of God" was again heard, saying: "Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad, for now I know that thou fearest God;" whereupon Abraham loosened the bonds that held his son, and seeing a ram in the bushes near by, offered it as a sacrifice instead of his son. God was of course delighted by this obedience, which did not even hesitate to sacrifice his own child, and repeated his promise of a vast number of descendants who should be "innumerable as the stars in

heaven" and the "sands of the sea" and ratified these promises with a sacred oath.

These are the main features in Abraham's life as portrayed by the old historians, particularly Moses. These are the "revelations" that were made to this man who is the founder of the doctrine of the "one, eternal God," who four thousand years ago laid the cornerstone of that "Monotheism" on which the religion of the civilized nations of today is based.

Like an eternal sickness this doctrine has been handed down from generation to generation. Centuries have come and gone, mighty nations have arisen only to vanish from the face of the earth, gigantic changes have taken place in the realm of human civilization, but the belief in the "only, eternal God" who is supposed to have revealed himself to a man living in the Orient four thousand years ago, stands like a rock in the ocean, impervious to time and tide, unchanged, unaltered to the present day.

What attitude can science take in the face of such things? That an individual being, such as is described here and whom religious people call "God," can not exist in reality, has already been stated. The existence of God is a scientific impossibility and can not even be considered any longer by the natural scientist. But where does science stand in reference to these so-called "revelations" of which the case of Abraham forms only the beginning? If there be no God, he can not have "revealed himself." On what, then, are all these accounts, and especially the above described "revelations" of Abraham, based?

Heretofore only one alternative has seemed possible in the matter of the "revelations" and "miracles" so frequently mentioned in the Bible—either to accept them as the truth or to consider them inventions. In the case of Abraham, it would be necessary to choose whether to believe that the "revelations" he was party to actually took place, or whether they were pure fabrications. The latter view is highly improbable, if only for the reason that there is no definite motive for such an invention. We can hardly believe that a man, as Abraham is described to be, should simply have

invented these things. Still less probable is it that the historian, in this case Moses, should have been the inventor of such occurrences. Furthermore, these "revelations," as will be seen further on, are by no means unparalleled, but, on the contrary, show a striking resemblance to other occurrences, so that a premeditated deception is almost an impossibility. But this in no way removes the difficulty of explaining these matters, for as there is no "God," there can be no divine "revelation."

But entirely aside from this fact, these so-called "revelations" which Abraham is supposed to have received, are so absurd that if a God really did exist they would be utterly unworthy of him. How is it possible that for thousands of years, and even today, people have really believed that their "only, eternal God" four thousand years ago picked out a miserable old man in Chaldea, to whom alone he "revealed" himself, irrespective of all the rest of mankind? This old man was not even a hero, nor one of those great geniuses such as the people of other nations made their leaders and who became the "favorites of the Gods." He is neither an Achilles nor a Herakles, he is not a Siegfried whom the Gods loved as their equal for his heroic qualities. No, none of all that; we have, on the contrary, to deal with an unprincipled old man, possessed of most unlovely traits of character, and certainly not qualified to enlist our sympathy. In Egypt as well as in Gerar he represented himself as the brother of his wife, impelled thereto, as he says, by the fear that he would be murdered. What pitiable cowardice these actions betray! But the fact that he was not ashamed to accept rich gifts from Pharaoh, as well as from Abimelech, arouses a keen suspicion that it was not fear alone that led him to this falsehood. And such a man the "only, eternal God" is supposed to have chosen from among all others to whom to "reveal" himself! How despicable was Abraham's behavior towards Hagar! He makes her his concubine and begets a son by her; then, persuaded thereto by his jealous wife, he drives poor Hagar with her son into the wilderness. In spite of the fact that he was so wealthy that he could send his servants with ten camels heavily laden

with treasures of all kinds to get a wife for his son Isaac, he did not hesitate to drive the woman he had once loved, her infant in her arms, into the wilderness with nothing but a flask of water and a loaf of bread. And this brutal act is supposed to have been committed in obedience to the command of God! What a lovable God this must have been to issue such commands!

How is it possible that religious people can believe their God capable of ordering a man to slaughter his own son merely to prove his obedience? We can not help asking again and again, how is it possible that mankind has believed this idiocy for four thousand years and still believes it?

If we examine our friend Abraham in the proper light, we find rather doubtful traits of character. He is untrue to Sarah, his wife; his other wife, Hagar, he treats with the greatest brutality. The former he was ready to prostitute for gain; the latter, with her child in her arms, he drives into the wilderness. Towards his sons he acts in a horrible and unnatural manner. The one, while yet a boy, he drives into the wilderness, and the other he is prepared to slaughter. This is the hero of mankind. This is the Father of the "chosen people." To this man alone, God chose to "reveal" himself! What a shocking lack of taste on the part of God! How is it possible to believe in such absurdities! O sancta simplicitas!

But if on the one hand the accounts of the "revelations" of Abraham are not to be taken as fabrications and on the other are found to be incredible and absurd, what shall we believe, how shall we explain these most peculiar accounts? Thousands of books have been written on this subject, as well as about the corresponding conditions and occurrences to be discussed further on. For centuries, nay, we may say millenniums, the learned world has tried to explain these things, and has tried to discover the deepest wisdom in them. No one has dreamed, however, of casting the faintest doubt on the fact that God first "revealed" himself to the great patriarch, Abraham, and even today this is one of the first things that is taught in school to children.

Anyone who does not forcibly close his mind to common

sense and reason must see the absurdity of these so-called "revelations." Even those who still cling to the belief in a God must come to this conclusion. If there really were a God, he would only be profaned by such stories. Is it not even from a strictly religious point of view a blasphemy to say that God made a "bargain" with a human being, and that he bound himself by an oath to fulfill his side of the "bargain"? Can one imagine a greater blasphemy? Furthermore, is it compatible with even the most orthodox religious views of the present day that "God" should have commanded a man to sacrifice animals to him? Is not the entire ceremony of sacrificial offerings the greatest conceivable idiocy?

The question which is now to be discussed, is whether we can scientifically explain these accounts of Abraham and his "revelations." For if we are not confronted with absolute fabrications, something which demands scientific explanation must be at the bottom of this matter.

Very well, then! The matter can be scientifically explained. Of course it is not to theology, physics, chemistry, or history to which we must look for help in this matter, but to a comparatively much younger science, that is to psychiatry.

The explanation for all these wonderful things, for the divine revelations as well as for the contradictions in the character of our hero, can be expressed in four words: *Abraham was a paranoiac.*

We must ask the reader who is not thoroughly conversant with this science to recall the chapter on paranoia and to regard our friend Abraham from this point of view.

Here we have a man who manifestly had certain mental abilities and who interested himself to a considerable extent in the phenomena of Nature. His observations aroused in him the notion that the current ideas regarding the Gods must be wrong, and that there could be only one God. From this belief, which gradually became a fixed idea with him, a number of other delusions developed. He believed himself persecuted by his fellow men, and in consequence decided to leave the country. Here, already, the delusions in

his brain were transformed into hallucinations. God, who heretofore was only an idea of his, now began to speak to him. He distinctly heard the voice that commanded him to leave his country. Gradually he heard this voice more and more frequently, until finally the before-mentioned remarkable dialogues between "God" and Abraham developed, and everything he did was at the supposed command of God. At the same time a delusion of grandeur, altogether characteristic of paranoia, showed itself in Abraham's conduct. He was the only chosen one, to whom "God" "revealed" himself. His descendants were to be numerous as "the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea." Mighty nations and great kings were to arise from his seed. One can hardly imagine a more typical delusion of grandeur. Everything, even the most absurd things that arose in his brain, appeared to him the commands of God. No doubt, while his wife was with Pharaoh, in Egypt, Abraham contracted a sexual disease, which afterwards caused him such annoyance that only the removal of the foreskin could relieve it, a condition which is frequently met with today in medical practice. Instantly he developed the delusion with its consequent hallucination that God commanded circumcision, not only for him, but for all the members of his family, his slaves and all his descendants. God made circumcision the condition of his bargain. Does it seem possible that such a senseless ceremony, produced by a diseased brain, should survive among the Jews until the present day, and may be practiced for "God" knows how many years to come?—that "God," who is supposed to have created man, should command him to cut off a part of this very being he has "created"? Did these wise Jews never ask themselves why the all-wise and all-knowing "God" did not "create" man without a foreskin, or in case he realized his mistake, why he, the "Almighty," did not at least create the rest of the males born to the earth without a foreskin? Can you imagine a more absurd religious ceremony than this circumcision? And to such nonsense "God" is supposed to have pledged mankind by a "bargain." Such an

idea could arise only in the mind of a paranoiac, and the manner of the origin of the delusion as described, namely, through a sexual disease, is more than probable.

In every act Abraham shows that gross egoism which is so characteristic of paranoia. He has no consideration for wife or child, he behaves toward them in a manner well nigh impossible to a normal human being, and all these eccentricities, even his unnatural conduct towards Hagar and her son, he claimed to have performed at the direct command of "God"—a thoroughly paranoiacal way of reasoning.

To the psychiatric expert the history of Abraham, as described by Moses in the Bible, presents a typical case of paranoia. The realization of this fact serves, scientifically, a double purpose. Firstly, this is the only way in which these "divine revelations" can be explained satisfactorily, and secondly we have at the same time an answer to the question, justly put so often, how the ancients may have explained to themselves the phenomena of this extraordinary disease. For there can be no doubt that paranoia existed then as it does today. That those people, with their delusions and hallucinations, of the real nature of which no one had the slightest idea at that time, must have had a remarkable influence on their surroundings, is quite evident. That they were not impostors was as clear to the people of those times as it is to the laity today, when they come in contact with paranoiacs. The sincerity, the fanaticism, and the entire manner in which these people speak of the queer ideas originating in their diseased brains, is so peculiar and characteristic that one immediately realizes that one has to deal with honest convictions and not with impostures. As what could the ancients have regarded such phenomena? When Abraham in all sincerity assured his people that "God" had spoken to him and had made certain "revelations" to him, how could they doubt that it really was so? How, in particular, could his children, who had the greatest reverence for him, for an instant question the truth of what he told them? He himself had not the faintest doubt that "God" "revealed" himself to him; why, therefore, should



his descendants entertain any such doubt? Thus these delusions and hallucinations have descended from generation to generation, as actual "revelations of God," and until the present day it has occurred to no one to present these occurrences in their true scientific aspect. Today children are taught in school, as they were four thousand years ago, that "God" revealed himself to Father Abraham, nobody harboring the faintest suspicion that at the bottom of these "revelations" was a case like which any number can be found in the hospitals for the insane today.

Paranoia is a disease in which heredity plays a great role. This, however, does not mean that paranoiacs must necessarily have paranoïcal children. There are many paranoiacs whose children are absolutely normal. But there is a strong possibility, where there are several children, that paranoia may show itself in one or more of them.

Abraham had eight sons, those already mentioned, Ishmael and Isaac, and besides these six sons by his wife Keturah, whom he married after the death of Sarah. Of only one of these sons, Isaac, have we definite accounts. The others the father is said to have sent to Arabia and Syria, where they became the ancestors of a large posterity.

The life of Isaac, as described by Moses, shows a remarkable resemblance to that of Abraham. Even in the trifling traits of character, the likeness is remarkable. Like his father, he disowned his wife, also passing her off as his sister in the land of the Philistines. He, too, claimed to be in fear of his life because of the charm that the beauty of his wife would exercise on the men of Philistia. As Pharoah did to Abraham, so Abimelech reproached Isaac for his falsehood and generously extended his royal protection to him.

Isaac had the same intercourse with "God" as had his father, Abraham. It was at "God's command" that, because of a famine, he went, instead of to Egypt, to Gerar, to Abimelech, King of the Philistines. But soon afterwards he left this country because he felt himself continually annoyed there, and envied for his great wealth. "God" made him the same promises he had made to his father.

"As numerous as the stars in Heaven" should be the descendants of his seed. Even the king was astonished at his wealth and power, so that he admitted to him that he was more powerful than he, the king himself, and therefore made a treaty with him. Nevertheless he traveled from place to place, believing himself everywhere molested and envied for his wealth and power.

In spite of the scanty reports we have concerning Isaac's life we can readily recognize that he, too, was subject to that mental disorder, paranoia. Here we have the same delusions and hallucinations which were manifested by the father. Of the eight sons, he is evidently the only insane one, for his brothers had no "revelations," they were ordinary men and led the life common to all normal people. Only Isaac had direct intercourse with "God." He inherited insanity from his father. Of course, Isaac was mentally far less gifted than his father, who was unusually intelligent. Abraham's knowledge of astronomy and mathematics is said to have been considerable, and his scientific thoughts later on formed part of the contents of his delusions. But with Isaac it is at first simply a case of repeating what he had heard from his father. Abraham, like all Jewish fathers, instructed his sons carefully in all things pertaining to "God." He imparted to them all that went to make up his delusions and hallucinations, and raised them in the devout belief in an "only, eternal God," who had chosen Abraham and his descendants from all the peoples of the earth, to whom to "reveal himself."

While the other children merely grew up in this religious atmosphere, believing in their father's teachings, and probably continuing to do so during their entire lives, Isaac soon showed unmistakable symptoms of paranoia, which gradually formed a systematic structure of delusions and hallucinations. These delusions, as is often the case in paranoia, soon developed into the two types, that of persecution and that of grandeur. Even in the few words in which Moses describes the life of Isaac the delusions of persecution are plainly to be seen. Everywhere he is molested and is forced to move from place to place. Taken

in connection with the other facts, especially the continual hallucinations, we have every reason to see a delusion of persecution in these molestations, which made it impossible for him to live for any length of time in one place. Just because Moses gives such a scant account of his life, greater importance must be attached to these facts. For had only ordinary occurrences taken place, they would not have forced themselves on the narrator as the most important moments of Isaac's life. In the envy he sees on all sides, we recognize the delusion of grandeur which in his intercourse with "God" and the latter's overwhelming promises, reaches its climax.

Isaac boasts constantly of his "wealth," of his importance and power, greater than that of kings, while at the same time he is described as a man in precarious circumstances. His son Jacob goes forth into a foreign country unaccompanied by a single servant and must serve many years to win a wife for himself. Esau finds nothing to eat in his father's house, so he sells his birthright for a mess of pottage. Isaac himself is glad when Esau kills a deer and for his prowess as a hunter in providing food, loves him more than he does Jacob. Because of a paltry well, which his father caused to be dug, he makes a terrible fuss. All this is not what we would naturally expect of a man of such wealth that he is universally envied. It looks far more as if Isaac lived in very straitened circumstances, and that his wealth and power were founded on the same delusions as were his interviews with "God," and his "revelations" and "promises."

Isaac had two sons, twins, Esau and Jacob. Esau, the first-born, was of powerful build and covered with red hair. He was fond of hunting and spent much of his time in the fields, close to nature. Jacob was more domestic in his tastes. One day when Esau returned from the hunt utterly exhausted, he felt so weak that he feared he would die on the spot and therefore begged his brother for food and drink. Jacob had just prepared a mess of pottage and offered to give some to his brother, on condition that the latter made over to him his birthright. Esau, who believed him-

self at the point of death, cared nothing for his birthright and willingly gave it up.

When Isaac grew old and blind and felt his end approaching, he ordered his son Esau to go hunting and kill a wild deer for him. After he had partaken of this he would give him his blessing. While Esau was executing this command, Jacob's mother prepared a dish that tasted very much like venison and induced her son Jacob, to whom she was partial, to play the part of Esau and thereby gain the father's blessing. Jacob followed this advice and to the blind father pretended to be Esau. Though Isaac recognized Jacob's voice he allowed himself to be deceived by a hairy garment Jacob had put on, and gave him the blessing intended for Esau. When the latter returned home and brought his father the desired venison, Isaac became aware of the deception, but the blessing, once given, could not be recalled and therefore remained Jacob's.

When the mother heard Esau take an oath to be revenged on his treacherous brother, she premeditated another trick by which Jacob might escape this danger. Under pretense of trying to prevent Jacob from taking to wife one of the inhabitants of Canaan, as Esau had done, Jacob was sent to his uncle Laban, to woo and win his daughter. On his way thither Jacob spent the night under the stars, and had a dream. He saw a ladder which led from the earth to Heaven, on which angels climbed up and down. At the top, at the gate of Heaven, stood God repeating to Jacob the promises he had made to his fathers, Abraham and Isaac. He would give him and his descendants the land of Canaan; he would multiply his descendants like the sand on the sea; north, south, east, and west the fruit of his seed should be spread; he would guard and protect him, wherever he went would give him safe conduct and lead him back to his home unharmed and unmolested. When he awoke, Jacob said: "This is the home of God," and erected the stone on which he had rested as a monument and covered it with oil. Then he made a vow that if God would keep his promise to clothe and feed him and lead him safely back to his family he would proclaim him as "his God."

Arrived at Haran, Jacob immediately fell in love with his cousin Rachel and agreed to his uncle Laban's terms to serve him seven years as the price of his wife. At the end of seven years the marriage took place, but on the following morning Jacob realized that his uncle had conducted her less attractive sister Leah to the bridal chamber instead of the beautiful Rachel. Called to account for this, Laban excused himself by stating that it was the custom of the country to marry the older sister first, but that he was willing to give him Rachel also, if he would agree to work another seven years for him. Jacob, being deeply in love with Rachel, yielded to the necessity and declared himself willing to enter into the bargain.

When Leah had borne four sons, Rachel still remained sterile, and therefore decided to follow the example of her grandmother, putting her handmaid at Jacob's disposal for the purpose of procreating his race, an offer of which Jacob gladly availed himself. In spite of being blessed by four sons, Leah was anxious not to be outdone by her sister in the matter of procreation, and therefore offered to her husband her maid, too, for the same purpose, to which the maid did ample justice. Later on both sisters themselves again took a hand in the business of producing children, the one adding two sons and a daughter to the older four sons, the other presenting her husband with two sons.

After having lived in Laban's home twenty years, during which the father-in-law and son-in-law had done their utmost to deceive and over-reach each other, he suddenly decided to return to Canaan, with all his possessions, with his wives, children, and flocks. Secretly, without informing his father-in-law of his plans, he crept out of the latter's house with his entire troop, his wife Rachel purloining a number of valuable images belonging to her father.

While so far "God" and the angels had "appeared" to Jacob only in dreams, they now began to "appear" to him while awake as well. As unto the father and grandfather, "God" promised also unto him an immense posterity, which would multiply "like the stars on Heaven" and the "sands

of the sea." He was also reassured as to the gift of the land. On the way to Canaan he met a man who began to wrestle with him and who proved unable to overpower him. This was "an angel of God." To show his strength, the "angel" dislocated Jacob's thigh by a mere touch. However, Jacob came out victorious from this struggle, "God" giving him thenceforth the name of "Israel," which means a "man who has conquered God."

In spite of this victory over "God," Jacob displayed the greatest anxiety and fear at the prospect of meeting his brother Esau, who had every reason to be incensed against him. When he heard that Esau with four hundred men was coming to meet him, he was overcome with despair. He, the "conqueror of God," had neither the courage nor the means to fight, and to run away he had no opportunity. Therefore he divided his wives and possessions into several parts, so that if one part be destroyed, he might still retain the others. Then he begged "God," whom he had so recently conquered, to protect and support him in the struggle with his brother, to whom he sent an abundance of gifts and assurance of his love and attachment. Esau had not the slightest intention of meeting his brother as an enemy. He returned the gifts and heartily welcomed his brother.

As was the case with his father, the dialogues with "God" appear to have grown more and more frequent also with Jacob, until he too consulted "God" about his every action and conscientiously followed the "divine" advice and commands.

The case of Jacob is one of paranoia closely resembling that of his father and grandfather. His brother Esau, since we are dealing with a degenerate family, also showed certain stigmata of degeneration. The very fact that his whole body was covered with a mass of red hair is considered a sign of degeneration. Besides, without having been actually insane, Esau seems to have had a very limited intelligence. He could devote himself only to physical occupations, such as hunting and things of that sort. Once, when he was particularly tired, he believed himself about to die, an exhibition of hypochondriasis such as is very

common among individuals of this sort. Of the value of his birthright as first-born, he had no idea, inasmuch as he gave it up for a mess of pottage. Only later on, when it had been explained to him what he really had done, did he become enraged against his brother.

Nevertheless, Esau had neither delusions nor hallucinations. Jacob's mind, however, was of an entirely different character. He was not feeble-minded, like his brother, but sly, tricky, as is frequently the case in people of his kind. He shows the same miserable traits of character, the same tendency to falsehood and treachery, that his father and grandfather displayed. What a pitiable action it was, to take advantage of his brother's weakness and starving condition, to make him give up his birthright for a miserable mess of pottage! It is palpably base and wicked to belie and deceive his blind old father for the express purpose of robbing his brother. A most contemptible, double crime. He also acted the part of a swindler and impostor towards his uncle Laban, who was, however, his match in both characters.

Is it possible that a "God," if there were one, would select just this man from all mankind to be his "chosen one?" A man of such contemptible character?

That there were and still are people who allow themselves to be deluded by these pathological cases, into believing in an "only, eternal God" cannot surprise us, such belief corresponding to the character of human nature. But that this supposed "God" should be so profaned, so ridiculed as to be believed to have elected this miserable Jacob his "chosen one," is and will remain most marvelous.

When God "appeared" to him in a dream the first time, at the portal of Heaven, on the top of the ladder on which angels climbed up and down, Jacob, on awaking, said to him: "If you will always provide for me and clothe me, if you will guide and protect me wherever I may go, and bring me back safely to my home, I will make you my God, and of all that you give me, I will give you one-tenth." What frightful blasphemy this is! What a blessing it is that there was no God, compelled to listen to these idiotic

words, and how glad we ought to be that there is no God today forced to see mankind reverencing, as something divine, these imbecile utterances of four thousand years ago.

What shall we say of the fact that this wrestling match with the "Angel of God" is not only taken seriously by the so-called "scientific" world, but that, as in the case of every other occurrence in the Bible, thousands of treatises have been written about why the angel allowed himself to be overcome by Jacob, why he dislocated only his thigh, how great must Jacob's piety have been that he was able to conquer "God's angel," and therefore God himself, and any amount of idiotic stuff besides. And all this in consequence of the hallucinations of a few insane old Jews, who blessed the earth with their presence some four thousand years ago.

Thanks to his four wives, Jacob succeeded in bringing twelve sons, worthy descendants of their paranoïcal ancestors, into the world.

After Jacob with his family had settled in the province of Hamor, his daughter, Dinah, met Hamor's son Shechem. He fell in love with the girl and had sexual intercourse with her. But Shechem, the son of the prince of the country, chose to deal honestly with the object of his passion, and went to Jacob to sue for the hand of his daughter. At the same time he promised to follow the custom of the time by giving many valuable gifts to the father and family of the bride. To Jacob and his family such an alliance with a princely house could only have been of great benefit, but above all other things to be considered, was the pure love of an upright man for the girl, towards whom he wished to act as a man of honor. Jacob's degenerate sons, who had undoubtedly inherited dishonesty and falsehood from their father, in giving their decision to Hamor, when he came in behalf of his son Shechem, announced that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could not ally themselves with an uncircumcized nation; but that they would consent to the marriage, if they would allow themselves to be circumcized. Hamor and his son agreed to this demand, for themselves and their followers, and persuaded the citizens



of the town that a union with the Israelites would be of immense advantage to them. Consequently every male citizen was circumcized.

Three days later, when the citizens, because of their wounds, were incapable of resistance, Jacob's sons, Simon and Levi, with their followers, fell upon the unsuspecting inhabitants of the city and massacred all the male citizens, including the prince and his sons. Of the women and children they made slaves, and the immense flocks, as well as all other valuables, they carried off as their booty.

It is true, actions vile as this are not unique in history. St. Bartholomew's night and similar occurrences are human brutalities of like nature—but to believe that a so-called "God" should have chosen such rascals to be the founders of the race of his "chosen people" is rank insanity!

When Jacob learned of this atrocity, he reproached his sons for having perpetrated it. That is, he began to bemoan his fate, fearing that the neighboring tribes would hate him for having permitted it, and that he and his family would be murdered. That his sons had committed an abhorrent crime troubled him little; only fear for the safety of his precious self disturbed him. What a miserable, pitiable creature, this "chosen of God!" And what a contradiction lies in his fear of being murdered! Where is the confidence in his God? Where is the vaunted courage of "Israel," the "conqueror of God?"

Jacob moved from one place to another, always in obedience to the command of the "will of God." Hallucinations became more and more frequent, due to a certain extent to the many troubles and agitations brought upon him by his sons.

Soon after the death of his wife, Rachel, which undoubtedly grieved him greatly, he made the sad discovery that his son Reuben had had sexual relations with his mother; that is, with one of Jacob's wives. It is almost like reading a tale of Boccaccio, to read the lives of these patriarchs of the "chosen people."

Words are inadequate to describe the vileness of Jacob's sons' treatment of their brother Joseph. Envy, pure and

simple, made them decide to kill him. Only their greed saved the boy's life, for by selling him into slavery they could get rid of him and at the same time obtain material reward for their abominable act. In the most brutal manner they lied to and deceived their old father, looking on cold-bloodedly while he grieved for his favorite son, who was restored to him only by a remarkable accident.

This is a brief account of the history of the "Patriarchs," founders of the "chosen people," and a psychological explanation of the so-called "revelations of God." When we stop to think what an immense influence the insanity of a few old Jews, who lived four thousand years ago, has had on the entire civilized world, we are almost tempted to wring our hands and question human understanding.

That paranoiacs were taken seriously in ancient times, that their delusions and hallucinations were believed in, that it was generally accepted that "God" only "revealed himself" to certain "enlightened" and "chosen people"—all this is not to be wondered at. For how could the ancients have explained these occurrences? They could see that they were not merely impostures nor malicious fabrications. How else could they explain these manifestations, except to credit them absolutely with divine origin?

But that we today, after natural science has definitely proved the impossibility of all these "divine" phenomena, after psychiatry has fully exposed, as such, those delusions and hallucinations—that we still today believe in these biblical stories and teach them to our children—that is a monumental disgrace of our intelligence.

In all that has been written about the "Patriarchs" and "founders of the race" not a decent trait of character can be found, not a single noble, superior action chronicled. Nothing but what is contemptible, nothing but lying and treachery, nothing but crime and hypocrisy is reported of these men whom mankind has elected as its heroes. And only comparatively few facts could be mentioned at this place. Lot, a nephew of Abraham, is, if possible, even more wicked than his uncle. He offers to prostitute his own daughters to a pack of Sodomites. And these daugh-

ters! What monstrosities of the human species! They make their own father drunk so as to have sexual intercourse with him—not only during the momentary influence of the alcohol, but during many consecutive nights, this sexual abomination was carried on. And these are supposed to be the “chosen people” of God! This is taught in school to our children! These contemptible, indecent, disgusting practices are praised as “divine,” and these men, for whose wickedness insanity is the only excuse, are believed to be the ones whom an “only, eternal, almighty God” should have chosen as the ones to whom to “reveal himself.”

## V. MOSES.

In consequence of the well-known career of his son Joseph, Jacob, with all his sons, emigrated to Egypt. The "promise of God," that the Israelites should multiply and be numerous as the "sands on the sea" soon bore fruit. To procreate has always been considered the highest, most sacred duty among the Jews. The more they had to suffer in the course of the centuries, the more they were oppressed and persecuted, the more were they inclined to seek solace in domestic life, in the family circle, and in building the latter to as large dimensions as possible.

Thus it was, that during their stay of four hundred years in Egypt, they multiplied to such an extent that at the end of that time they numbered about six hundred thousand able-bodied men; women and children, of course, not being included.

What the real cause was for the hatred which the Egyptians cherished against the Israelites, is difficult to ascertain today. Probably it was for no other cause than the one harbored by all nations with whom the Jews came in contact during the course of time.

Probably the reason for this is, simply, that every nation which tries to live in common with another is hated. History proves that such relations between nations cannot exist for any length of time. One nation must either be entirely merged in the other or a mutual, irreconcilable hatred will be engendered between them.

Thus, the Jews were greatly oppressed and persecuted in Egypt. Why, according to some accounts, the attempt to entirely exterminate them even was made.

Under these circumstances a man appeared whose name stands alone in history, a man who succeeded in freeing the

Israelites from their bondage in Egypt, a man who gained a power and influence over a whole nation, like which there is no other case in the history of the world—Moses.

For us, Moses is of particular interest because with the exception of Christ, no other man has had such an influence on the religion of modern civilized nations, and we will therefore have to familiarize ourselves with his life and work.

Found by a princess, in a basket entrusted to the waters of the Nile, he was raised at the Egyptian court. Being made a general of the army by the king, he won a glorious victory over a hostile neighbor. While he stood outside the walls of the hostile capital, commanding his troops, the daughter of the opposing king fell in love with him and offered to marry him. He accepted the offer on the condition that the city be surrendered to him. Later, God appeared to him and made him master and leader of his "chosen people," the Israelites. After being endowed by God with superhuman abilities, he led his people in the most marvelous manner, through the raging flood whose waves parted and rose like walls on both sides, allowing them to pass through to safety, closing up and swallowing the pursuing Egyptians, man and horse. Through the wilderness he led his people to Mount Sinai, where God revealed himself to him and gave him the ten commandments for his followers. Amidst thunder and lightning, the will of God was made known to him. All obstacles arising in his path he conquered, until finally he was able to show his people the Promised Land. Just when he had reached the goal of his desires, his life, so rich in poetic experiences, came to an end.

From what has been said in the foregoing chapters the reader has himself perhaps reached the conclusion that Moses was one of those intellectually highly developed, nay, even ingenious paranoiacs, and we will have to investigate the main manifestations of his paranoia.

That the so-called "revelations" as well as all the other "relations" of "God" to the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, have been transmitted from generation to generation,

can be seen from the very fact that Amram, the father of Moses, had complete knowledge of those very occurrences. Josephus tells us he heard God speak to him in a dream, reminding him of all these occurrences and promises. The oral and written transmission of all religious things from the time of Abraham until today, has always been considered a sacred duty among the Jews. Whether Moses himself, who was raised at the Egyptian court, was instructed in these things in his youth is rather doubtful; it is more probable that they were entrusted to him in later life.

The before mentioned episode, when the Egyptians under the generalship of Moses fought against the Ethiopians, is not mentioned in the Bible by Moses himself, while Josephus dwells upon it at length, and Irenæus also relates it in his writings. As Moses merely intended to write a history of the Israelites, it is perfectly natural that he did not mention this affair, which concerned only the Egyptians, and had nothing to do with the Israelites. The only motive that might have induced him to interpolate this episode, in spite of its irrelevance to the history of the Jews, would have been personal vanity. On the other hand, by doing so he would have had to acknowledge the fact that he married an Ethiopian, which was against the "will of God." We have, therefore, no reason to doubt the accounts of Josephus.

Immediately after this victorious campaign, Moses was compelled to "flee" from Egypt in the direction of the desert, all the open roads being occupied by his enemies. Josephus tries to account for this unexpected flight after such a victory, by the fact that the Egyptians had a grudge against him, suspecting the attempt of an insurrection on his part so as to carry out his plans of reform in Egypt; that for this reason they instigated secret plots and conspiracies against him, and appealed directly to the king to have him put to death. The king himself is said to have been anxious to rid himself of Moses, being envious of his victory and fearing for his throne on his account. Even the priests are said to have advocated his death.

Does all this seem even fairly probable? Was not a vic-

torious general always exceedingly popular among the people at all times, and in all countries, and are we to believe that the Egyptians hated Moses because of his great victory? Did you ever hear of a king envying his own general on account of his victories? Had a king of Egypt any cause to be jealous of Moses or to be afraid of him? Is it to be believed that he who was raised at court as the protégé of the king's daughter, he to whom the king entrusted his army with which he won a glorious victory, should be hated and his death desired on all sides? Does this not sound much more like a typical paranoïcal delusion of persecution? If we recognize a typical case of paranoia in the further manifestations of his life, we need not hesitate for a moment to regard his flight from Egypt as the direct result of a delusion of persecution.

Moses himself gives as a reason for his flight his killing of an Egyptian, who had in his presence abused an Israelite. Why it is that Moses gave this account, whether this version or the other be true, or what really is most probable, whether facts are really at the bottom of both accounts, we are not able to decide positively today, and this after all is not of paramount importance for our purpose, anyway.

It is well known how Moses came to the city of Midian, and as a reward for the protection he extended to the daughters of Jethros, was given one of them as his wife. While leading his father-in-law's flocks to pasture, he frequently came close to Mount Sinai, which was at that time in active eruption. The superstitious shepherds were imbued with a holy fear of this mountain, filling the air with fire and smoke and making the earth vibrate with the detonations of thunder. Since olden times the legend prevailed in this region that the Gods made their abode on this mountain, just as the Greeks made Olympus the abode of their Gods. It was with great diffidence that anyone approached this holy place, and no one would have dared to climb this mountain and thereby force his way into the sanctuary of the Gods.

What kind of thoughts must the brain of Moses have

engendered, when from morning until night, separated from the whole world of man, surrounded only by his flocks, he tarried in this mysterious place? Watching the purple flames of the volcano glowing through the dark columns of smoke, listening to the rolling thunder echoing across to him as from another world, he fancied himself in the presence of the Deity and that he heard voices. He reviewed his own past, already so rich in varied experiences. He thought of his forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He thought of the promises "God" had made to them, how he would bless their descendants and make them multiply, how he had vowed to present them with the land of Canaan. The first part of this promise, given so frequently, that the children of Israel should multiply and be numerous as the "sand of the sea" or "the stars in the heavens," Moses actually saw fulfilled, for from one family there arose a whole nation that numbered several million souls. So much the greater must have been the pain that filled his heart to see his people so far from the realization of the second part of the promise. Instead of enjoying the blessings of the Promised Land where milk and honey flowed, instead of living in happiness and freedom, the Israelites were the abused slaves of a people which did not even know the "only, eternal God," but worshiped abhorrent idols.

How often must thoughts like this have tortured his brain! What may he not have planned, of what may he not have thought and dreamed, during those long days of solitude!

Suddenly, one day, Moses became aware of an immense fire in a bush in the woods, that shed an unusually bright glow. But neither wood, nor leaves, nor blossoms were consumed by the fire. As Moses, filled with fright and astonishment, was in the act of approaching nearer to the fire, a loud voice resounded out of the midst of the bush: "Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. . . . I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."<sup>1</sup> And when Moses, startled,

<sup>1</sup>Exodus iii: 5-9.



turned his face away, being afraid to look at "God," the voice continued to tell him that he, God, had seen the misery of the people of Israel, had heard their lamentations, and had decided to deliver this people from bondage and to lead it where milk and honey flowed, as he had promised their forefathers.

Thereupon God informed Moses that he had chosen him to conduct the children of Israel out of Egypt, to the Promised Land, giving him exact instructions as to how he should act towards Pharaoh, and how to demand the freedom of the Israelites.

At first Moses hesitated to accept this obligation. He protested to God that he was not worthy to occupy the position of a messenger of God, whereupon God promised him that he himself would stand by him in his difficult mission and would be ready to help him any and every time. Then he asked God what he should tell the people when they asked of him the name of God, and God answered, "My name is I Am That I Am."

When Moses, in spite of all this, still hesitated and maintained that without proofs nobody would believe in his divine mission, God invested him with the power to perform miracles, *i. e.*, to turn his rod into a serpent, to render his hand leprous and to heal it again, and to turn water into blood. Finally Moses protested that his lack of eloquence as well as a congenital deficiency in his speech unfitted him for this undertaking, whereupon God commanded him to make his brother Aaron his spokesman.

God having at last removed all obstacles, Moses agreed to accept the mission. He bade farewell to his father-in-law and started with wife and child for Egypt. On the way there, at an inn, an angel with scornful visage and flaming sword appeared to him and threatened to kill him because he had allowed his wife to persuade him not to have his youngest son circumcized. Only after this ceremony had been performed did the angel disappear and God announce himself propitiated.

How can we for an instant doubt that we are here dealing with a case of ordinary hallucinations? The entire

occurrence, as described by Moses himself, resembles in every respect, even to the minutest details, the cases of paranoïcal hallucinations to be observed daily in our modern hospitals for the insane. The fact that God's command appeared to take Moses by surprise, and that he obstinately refused to comply with the wish of the Lord, can not possibly be brought up as an argument against the assumption of hallucinations, but is, on the contrary, quite in accordance with our experience on that subject.

Moses, living for years in this solitude, was entirely dependent on his own thoughts. As stated before, we may assume with certainty that his mind was occupied almost exclusively with events concerning his forefathers, as well as the present fate of the Israelites. It is even generally supposed that during this period of his life he wrote the "Book of Genesis" and the "Book of Job," the latter as an example of endurance, to comfort and encourage the Israelites in their bondage. The "discussion" with God therefore represents merely a chain of thoughts which surely must have been forged quite frequently in his mind. On the one hand was his keen desire to perform great exploits, and to help his brethren; on the other he was aware of his shortcomings and did not feel himself equal to this task. These cogitations, pro and con, found their paranoïcal expression in the delusions that God had called on him to perform this mission, and that he refused to obey the command, and these delusions produced the corresponding hallucinations of sight and hearing.

Anyone who maintains the viewpoint of modern science and is convinced of the impossibility of the existence of a personal God, will not for an instant take exception to the accounting for these occurrences by the assumption of hallucinations. But can he who, on the other hand, believes in the existence of a God, imagine his God in a discussion with Moses? Can he have such a ridiculous conception of God as to believe that he bargained with Moses, that he made concessions to him just as a clothing merchant would do in engaging a traveling salesman? Must not he who really believes in God call it blasphemy, if you say that God

engaged in juggler's tricks, turning a staff into a serpent, like a common prestidigitateur? Could you believe for a second that God sent an angel with a flaming sword to kill his "messenger," because he had omitted to have his son circumcized? Would you think it possible that there are today educated people who can believe in this nonsense? But most absurd of all is the fact that in his address to Moses, God should have commanded the Israelites to steal from the Egyptians their gold and silver ornaments, and to give them to their own sons and daughters. And this nonsense has been believed for thousands of years, and is still believed today, while all these things can be satisfactorily explained by accepting them as manifestations of paranoia, thereby giving a comprehensive picture of the man as well as of the surrounding conditions.

So then, Moses set out for Egypt! His hallucinations had become so frequent that he held continual communications with God and undertook hardly anything without having corresponding hallucinations. God commanded him to appear before Pharaoh and perform his miracles for him. But at the same time he told Moses that he had hardened Pharaoh's heart to such an extent that he would not release the Israelites! What nonsense this is! God wishes to deliver his "chosen people," but himself so hardens the heart of the tyrant that he the more abuses them.

Moses' delusions of grandeur had in the meantime assumed such dimensions that God now told him to appear before Pharaoh as a God. "See, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron, thy brother shall be thy prophet."\* Now follow all the miracles, plagues, and punishments which Moses, through God, inflicts on Pharaoh. The turning of the staff into a serpent, the turning of the waters of the river into blood, the plague of frogs, of lice, of flies, of grasshoppers, the sickness of cattle and of the people, the hailstorms, the darkness, and finally the "massacre of the first-born."

That the so-called miracles were simply juggler's tricks,

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\*Exodus, vii: 1.

which at that time were not universally known, is easily proven by the fact that the king's magicians imitated all these "miracles." To state positively today what these magic feats were and how they were performed is as useless as it is unnecessary. How absurd are all the "commentaries" on this spirit, according to which "evil spirits," as the magicians are called, are able by their art to imitate the Deity to a certain extent!

The "plagues" were nothing but manifestations of Nature, which probably were rare in Egypt at that time. Swarms of insects and vermin, epidemics of disease in man and beast, hailstorms, eclipses of the sun, etc.—all these were construed by Moses in genuine paranoïc fashion as having been sent by God to punish Pharaoh and to soften the heart which God himself had "hardened."

It is always the same question again, which presents itself, how is it possible that those who believe in the existence of God can have so pitiable an opinion of their God as to believe that he should have caused all these disgraceful transactions? If we accept these paranoïcal statements of Moses as truth, which in fact, the world has done up to the present day, we must believe that God intentionally so hardened Pharaoh's heart that he would under no circumstances release the Israelites. Then in the face of a condition which he himself created, God sent all kinds of plagues to torment thousands of innocent people and killed thousands of innocent little children. How could all the first-born children of the Egyptians help it that Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go? How could Pharaoh himself act differently, since God had hardened his heart? God is at one and the same time tyrant, murderer, judge and protector. What abhorrent nonsense!

After the Israelites, following the "advice of God," had "borrowed" as much gold and silver plate from the Egyptians as they could get, they, under Moses' guidance, finally succeeded in escaping from Egypt. But Pharaoh, whose heart still remained "hardened," pursued them with his army, intending to bring them back by force. Driven by the Egyptians into the narrows between the sea and the moun-

tains, they were on the verge of despair, when that well-known "miracle" took place, that is, when the waves of the sea separated, making a path over which the Israelites could pass in safety, but closing up and engulfing the Egyptians, man and horse.

The most extravagant commentaries have been written about this occurrence. Without doubt it was produced by some natural phenomenon, the same as the deluge which Suess, the great geologist, has explained so masterly on the principles of natural science.

The desultory wanderings of the Israelites through the desert, which lasted for nearly half a century, belong to the most astounding phenomena in the history of man. In a direct course the Israelites could have made the trip from Egypt to Canaan, in a three days' march. But Moses, during this long period of time, led them aimlessly about in the wilderness, amidst the greatest privations and suffering, and all that at the "command of God." For everything that Moses henceforth did, all his actions and enterprises were the direct result of his hallucinations. The path through the wilderness, according to Moses, was pointed out to the Israelites by God himself, inasmuch as he caused a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to precede them on their journey. These pillars of smoke and fire are easily explained. It was an old custom in the desert to carry at the head of large caravans a long pole on the top of which was some burning substance, the fire of which by night and smoke by day were used as signals. Undoubtedly the Israelites too availed themselves of the obvious benefit of such a custom. That Moses calls this "the glory of God" and actually believed that God was in the smoke and fire is again due to his paranoïcal interpretation of his surroundings.

When the people, driven to despair by hunger and thirst, rebelled against this senseless guidance, Moses told them of the anger of "God" who had delivered them from slavery, and whose great love and goodness they repaid with such ingratitude. In the numerous commentaries written on this subject, we generally find that it is hardly credible that, in the face of God's great mercy, a people could have remained

so "stubborn," and that Moses probably exaggerated the refractoriness of the people to augment his own fame. But as a matter of fact the case is exactly the reverse. It belongs to those incomprehensible occurrences in history that a whole nation allowed itself to be led by the nose, hither and thither, for half a century, by one insane man. An ordinary man, even though a great genius, would never have been able to exert such an influence over a whole people. Only the mystical paranoiac, with the fanaticism engendered by his delusions and the enigmatical actions caused by his hallucinations, could have accomplished anything so extraordinary.

"God's commands" which Moses announced to the people, are nearly all so absurd that it must continually surprise us anew that a whole nation could allow itself to be so befooled.

Because God had slaughtered the first-born children of the Egyptians, he now ordered the Israelites to sacrifice to him all their first-born males, of men and animals. A lamb could be substituted for a first-born male, but if one did not care to provide a substitute for him, his neck should be broken. Animals could be substituted for first-born boys. And such nonsense God should have commanded. Is not the Greek religion, the Greek mythology, with all its poetry, ten thousand times more sensible?

After Moses had dragged this poor people about in the desert, where they suffered unspeakable agonies of hunger and thirst, they grew, as may be expected, quite discontented, longing for something more substantial than the "Heaven-sent manna." Hereupon "God" sent them a whole swarm of quail, which covered the ground in heaps. The people, naturally, fell eagerly upon them. But no sooner had they devoured this delicious meal than God displayed his anger at their discontent by punishing them with a terrible plague.

Of course the real facts of this occurrence are, that an epidemic had broken out among these birds of passage, and that they fell to earth, dead, in great swarms. The poor people who wanted to appease their hunger were poisoned

by some toxin. How utterly absurd is the paranoiac's interpretation, that God sent the quail to the imploring people, but at the same time punished them for their importunity! To interpret everything that happens, no matter what it may be, in this peculiar way, is absolutely characteristic of paranoia.

The climax, however, of Moses' insanity was reached when he led the Israelites to Mount Sinai and there received the "ten commandments" directly from "God."

Moses climbed the mountain, up and down, carrying messages between "God" and the people. "God" bade Moses tell the people that if now, after having seen what he was capable of doing, they would obey and keep his covenant, he would prefer them to all the nations of the world and make them his own "chosen people," for "all the earth was his." After the people had promised to obey, God sent them word that they should wash their clothes and hold themselves ready to receive him; for on the third day he would come down to the mountain and speak to them. Then Moses was commanded by God to build a fence around the mountain and to admonish the people that whoever dared to venture within this border, whether "man or beast," would be put to death. Whoever so much as even touched it should be stoned to death.

On the third day, amidst thunder and lightning, Moses received the ten commandments. How amiable must be that "God" who says that he will visit the sins of the fathers on the children unto the third and fourth generation. Then God directs how the altar shall be built on which oxen and sheep are to be sacrificed to him. If the altar be built of stone, the stone must not be hewn, for the touch of the chisel desecrates the altar.

After this follow the laws and ceremonies which are observed by the Jews up to the present time. Those laws and regulations which Moses claimed to have received directly from "God" are not merely of a religious character, but correspond, in a measure, to our present idea of a criminal and civil code.

That all these laws and ceremonies as Moses describes them in the Bible should have been dictated or written down by God himself is hardly believed today, even by orthodox religious people. It has therefore been suggested that the "wise" leader of the people adopted this diplomacy in order to lend authority to the book of laws of which he himself had been the author. According to this theory, Moses was well acquainted with the real volcanic nature of Mount Sinai, having led the people there merely to deceive them by making them believe that this was the abode of the Lord, who had revealed himself to him, their leader. His purpose in doing this would have been to increase his own influence with the people and strengthen his authority.

To this we must reply that we can only assume that either the entire communication between "God" and Moses, from beginning to end, was all invention, that is, that Moses never believed himself that he heard the voice of God, but invented the whole thing for a definite purpose; or that he himself was thoroughly convinced of the reality of all the divine revelations which he communicated to the people. For if Moses believed that God really did reveal himself and spoke to him at all, it would be an inconceivable blasphemy on his part to make such ill use of the confidence the Lord had put in him as to tell the people of those laws and ceremonies, which actually never were given by God. This would be a flat contradiction of the whole situation as well as of the character of Moses, and must be rejected as inconceivable.

But, aside from this, it is impossible for us to recognize in Moses the "wise legislator" he is credited with being by the world today. The laws and ceremonies which were given to the people on Mount Sinai are partly borrowed from the customs of the Egyptians, and are partly so absurd and ridiculous that they could only have emanated from a paranoïcal brain. It is, of course, impossible to go into all the laws and rites which are recorded with endless repetitions all through Moses' second book,<sup>2</sup> in the entire

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<sup>2</sup>Exodus xix-xl.



third book (Leviticus) and in part of the fourth (Numbers). Only some part thereof may be mentioned at this place.

At the very beginning, we find the famous, and of a God, most unworthy dictate: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot," etc. This "God" is very liberal with the application of capital punishment. According to the commandments handed down by "God" on Mount Sinai, even an ox which has bumped into a man, causing his death, must be "stoned to death," and his flesh may not be eaten. The owner of the ox is not to be punished. If, however, the ox has previously injured others, and the owner has taken no precautions against eventual repetitions, he too, is to be put to death. He who does not keep "my" Sabbath holy and performs any work on that day, shall be put to death.

Ceremonies of every kind, whether of a religious, political or social nature, have their real origin in human weakness. It takes a ceremonious display to impress the people with the necessary importance of a thing. People have more respect for a judge in a long black robe than for one in ordinary civilian's clothes. People are much more deeply impressed and exalted by elaborate ceremonies that act on various senses simultaneously, like music, incense, costly raiment, brilliant coloring; than by a simple lecture in every day surroundings. From this point of view, ceremonies have a certain justification as means of suggestion.

But that a "God" should himself have ordered these ceremonies even to the minutest details, must appear to religious believers far more like blasphemy than the truth. How absurd to believe that God, on Mount Sinai, amidst thunder and lightning, should have decreed what material should be used in the making of the robes of the priests, what precious stones should be used, how many rows of diamonds and sapphires were to be sewed on their coats! How ridiculous that God should have ordered Moses to build him a tabernacle covered with pure gold, decorated with curtains of silk and costly jewels! God orders his "sacrifices" of Moses, exactly as anyone would order a dinner for himself of a waiter. He gives exact instructions

as to what kind of meat shall be given to him, the God, and how it shall be prepared. "God" is represented as a veritable beggar, asking the people for gold, silver, purple, fine linen, and anything else that has the slightest value.

Moses remained forty days on the mountain, fasting, in continual intercourse with God, receiving commands and instructions from him. When, at the expiration of this time, he returned to the people, he found them engaged in dancing around a golden calf which Aaron had fashioned for them, and worshipping it in the manner of the Egyptians. When "God" heard of this he became exceedingly wroth and announced to Moses his intention to destroy all the Israelites, and to make a great nation of the descendants of Moses. But Moses explained to him that such action would be very unwise and would necessarily injure his, "God's," reputation in the eyes of the Egyptians. The Egyptians would say: "Did this God conduct the Israelites out of Egypt, to slay them in the wilderness and to wipe them from the face of the earth?" "Therefore, moderate your anger," said Moses to God, "and repent of this evil you contemplated doing your people. Remember your oath given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that you would multiply their seed like the stars of heaven." After this lecture "the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."<sup>3</sup> Is this not the most inconceivable nonsense? Did you ever hear in the religious doctrines of other nations, of a God, and an "only, eternal God" at that, who was rebuked in such a manner by a man, and that this God took the lesson seriously to heart? This delusion of grandeur in which Moses constitutes himself the mentor of God, is thoroughly characteristic of his paranoia. But that the entire civilized world up to the present day has made these insane utterings their religion, is the most marvelous of all things! God did not even profit lastingly by Moses' correction, for Moses had to lecture to him in exactly the same way on another occasion later on.<sup>4</sup>

The punishment of the people for worshipping the golden

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<sup>3</sup>Exodus xxxii: 14.    <sup>4</sup>Numbers xiv: 12.

calf, Moses inflicted in his own particular way. He ordered the sons of Levi to arm themselves with swords and carry avengement through the entire camp. A fearful butchery took place. Unmercifully, every one was to slay, "at God's command," his own brother, his best friend, his peaceful neighbor. In this way, three thousand people were massacred. What a splendid fruit of the tree of religion!

How one can read the third book of Moses, called Leviticus, without, even as a layman, getting the impression that it was written by an insane person, is one of those peculiar things for which an explanation is hardly possible.

The first chapters of this book deal exclusively with instructions concerning the various sacrifices. God is supposed to have stated accurately what meat should be sacrificed to him, how it was to be cut, what oil should be poured over it, how the altar should be wet with blood, and many other equally foolish details. You must read this nonsense in the original, at the same time bearing in mind that "God" himself is supposed to have arranged it all.

In the tabernacle we find—of course always at "God's command"—the lamp with the perpetual fire which alone was to be used for sacrifices. When Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, used ordinary fire while performing sacrifices, they were instantly burned to death by the fire "sent by God." At least that is the way in which Moses paranoically interpreted an unfortunate accident, even adding that no one, whether father or brother, would be allowed to mourn for the miserable victims.

Most nonsensical of all are those dietary laws, which—one may hardly think it possible—are being observed by the Jews to the present day. Although not a grain of sense is to be found in them, the "great wisdom" of Moses is said to be seen particularly therein. Because several thousand years later trichinosis was discovered in one of the many forbidden animals, Moses is praised as the "wise law-giver," who even at a time so far back recognized what the rest of mankind discovered only so many centuries later. At the same time Moses expressly gives the reason why "God" forbade the eating of these animals. Instead

of the presence of trichinosis, he gives an absolutely nonsensical reason.

All animals having a split hoof and chewing their cud, are permitted, but those fulfilling only one of these conditions are forbidden. The camel chews his cud, but has no split hoof, therefore the people were not allowed to eat of his meat. The same is true of rabbits and pigs. Is not this rank idiocy? Is there any possible wisdom back of this command? Anything living in the water having fins and scales, may be eaten, but those animals that have no fins are "unclean!" Locusts and grasshoppers may be eaten! Animals not having split hoofs were "unclean" and it was a sin even to touch them. Whole paragraphs in this book of Moses sound like the incoherent babble of a lunatic. Take, for instance, this passage: "Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon all four, or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them ye shall not eat; for they are an abomination. Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby, for I am the Lord, your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, for I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."<sup>5</sup>

Passages like this one speak for themselves. They are absolutely characteristic of insanity.

What nonsense "God" is supposed to have ordained in "purifying" women during childbirth. By "purifying" you must not think that something like "cleanliness" was meant, a condition which could not have been too strongly recommended to the Jews; it meant something altogether mystical. When a woman gave birth to a son, she remained "unclean" seven days, after which she was to continue "in the blood of the purification" for thirty-three days. During this time

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<sup>5</sup>Leviticus xi: 42-45.

she was not permitted to enter the sanctuary. If, however, her child was a daughter, she remained "unclean" two weeks and must continue "in the blood of her purification" for sixty-six days. At the expiration of this time she must bring a lamb not more than a year old, a young pigeon, and a turtle-dove as a sin-offering, to the door of the Tabernacle and give it to the priest, who would then sacrifice these animals. If she was unable to bring a lamb, she was to give the priest two turtle-doves instead. And mankind believes that a God could have given such orders.

But what kind of a God is he who continually commands the people to "stone" their fellowmen! "God" presents a long list of offenses for which the death penalty, in various forms, is to be inflicted.

How absurd to believe that a God should have commanded that no priest who had any physical defect should consummate any act, in his sanctuary. A blind man, or a lame man, one without a nose, or one with a deformed limb; one who had a broken hand or foot, a hunchback or a dwarf; one who had an injured eye or an eruption on his skin, might not enter the sanctuary nor bring sacrifices on the altar! Is this not the craziest stuff that one can imagine? Only a paranoiac can produce such nonsense!

The fourth book of Moses is no less absurd. Everything Moses did, everything he commanded the people to do, as the direct result of his hallucinations, was supposed to be a "command of God" which he had to execute. That a whole nation allowed itself to be lastingly dictated to by this one insane man, to carry out all this frightful nonsense, is one of the most marvelous phenomena in history.

Anyone not yet convinced that Moses was insane, should take the Bible and carefully read the original chapters bearing on this subject. There is the chapter<sup>6</sup> which deals with the laws regarding women accused of adultery. In this it states that the priest should perform all sorts of absurdities and finally give the woman some "bitter water" to drink. If this makes "her belly to swell, and her thigh to rot," she

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<sup>6</sup>Lv: 5, 11-31.

is guilty; if not, she is innocent. And all this God is believed to have commanded! The following chapter, the sixth, contains such incoherent stuff that it is simply impossible to reproduce it.

Delusions of grandeur are drawn like a thread through all the writings of Moses. His own personality always stands in the foreground. He, personally, is the "chosen" of God. Why, as we have seen, he even reprimands "God" and gives him advice and instructions. Quite characteristic of his delusions and hallucinations is the story of God's refusal to let him see his face, and the promise to show him his back. He would place Moses on a rock and cover his eyes with his hand, while he would pass by; for the sight of his face would bring death to the beholder; but his back Moses may see.

Because Miriam reproached Moses for marrying an Ethiopian woman, "God" punished her with leprosy. What an admirable God! But, at Moses' persuasion, God cured her, after letting her remain outside the limits of the camp for seven days.

When, after endless wanderings and indescribable privations in the wilderness, the Israelites at last arrived at the border of the "Promised Land," that land "where milk and honey" were supposed to flow, the men who had been sent out to reconnoiter reported that they had seen neither "milk" nor "honey," but that the land was inhabited by strong men in comparison to whom the Israelites were like "grasshoppers," that the cities were strongly fortified and surrounded by high walls. Thereupon the people began to complain and lament that they had left Egypt only to be sacrificed to the swords of these men and to see their wives and children destroyed. They consulted among themselves as to how they could best return to Egypt. When Moses and Aaron tried to soothe and quiet them, they were in danger of being stoned to death by the people. But then "God" grew angry because the people still had no faith in him, and told Moses that he intended to destroy them by a plague, and to create a great Nation out of the descendants of Moses, in their place. But Moses rebuked him, as he

had done on a former occasion, explaining to him again that he would seriously injure his reputation in the eyes of the Egyptians; that they would say that the reason he destroyed the entire people in the desert was that he was unable to lead them to the "Promised Land." God again saw his error, as Moses pointed it out to him. To save his reputation, he decided not to exterminate the Israelites, but his anger against this rebellious people was so great that he took an oath that not one of them should enter the "Promised Land," that they should wander about in the desert forty years and that only their descendants should enjoy the fruits of this land.

Whole books could be written about the paranoia of Moses. The episodes in his life, here mentioned, form only a small part of that which could be used to demonstrate and prove his insanity. Anyone fairly well acquainted with the nature and character of paranoia must see in every sentence in the books of Moses, particularly in those dealing with Moses himself, a manifestation of this mental anomaly. It ought not to be difficult even for the layman, after what has been said on the subject, to convince himself of this fact.

In the beginning, in his flight from Egypt, we have his delusions of persecution. To this are added, as often happens, the delusions of grandeur, which are soon combined with hallucinations arising therefrom. These gradually become more and more frequent until finally they govern all his thoughts and actions. His whole life is characterized by a fanaticism to be found only among paranoiacs. The content of his delusions and hallucinations is most absurd and often utterly ridiculous. Instead of the much vaunted "wise laws" we find nothing but absurdities and a few customs and traditions borrowed from the Egyptians. To any religious person, believing in the existence of God, his descriptions of God must appear a blasphemy. A God, as Moses describes him, would be the most ridiculous, senseless, unjust, and cruel personality that can possibly be thought of. Imagine a God, who is supposed to have commanded a small, insignificant people not only not to mingle

with any other people, but to hate all other nations, though they had done absolutely nothing to injure them, and to attack and murder them in the most gruesome manner, "showing not the slightest mercy."

That a whole nation allowed itself to be led about by the nose for half a century, by an insane man, and even allowed itself to be abused by him, that for several thousand years the delusions and hallucinations of this man were believed to be "revelations of God," is remarkable enough. But that today, in spite of all the accomplishments of natural science, in spite of our "enlightened" century, we still believe in these manifestations of insanity as in something divine, and teach them to our children in school as such, would really be too comical, were it not so unspeakably tragic.



## VI. THE PROPHETS.

The laws and regulations, which the Lord gave his people through his representative, Moses, applied, as stated above, not only to religious matters, but to every possible occurrence in life. They might have formed a veritable civil and penal code, had they not as a consequence of their delusional origin been so incoherent and contradictory. But this giving of laws was not the only way in which the Lord manifested himself to his people. God himself—of course always through Moses—undertook the management of the public affairs, as well as the government of the whole nation.

For a proper understanding of these things it is absolutely necessary to clearly understand Moses' conception of "God." The modern philosophical doctrine of Monotheism is fundamentally different from the theistic ideas of Moses. He conceived "God" as a person, with whom he held intercourse as he would with any of his friends. God was a corporeal being of the same appearance as man. He had a "face" which he refused to show to Moses because the sight of it brought death. But he permitted him to see his "back," and with his "hand" he closed his eyes. He had a human voice and spoke like human beings.

He was the "only, eternal God," not in the sense of our modern Monotheism, but the "only God" whom the people of Israel were to worship and to whom they were to bring sacrifices. This "only God" was jealous of "other Gods," and his desire was to destroy them. For that reason he "chose" a people which he needed for this purpose and with which he made various "covenants." On his side, he bound himself, by oath "to carry out his part of" the covenant and expected the same from "his people." He and

none other, therefore, was the "Lord" and Master of this nation.

Here we have, not only during Moses' lifetime, but also during the following four hundred years, a form of government such as never existed before nor since that time, a theocracy in the true sense of the word. God, in his own person, was Lord and King of the people whom he himself governed, whom he commanded in war, whose domestic affairs and troubles he arranged and adjusted.

In the camp he had his own tent made of gold and silver, according to his own suggestions. He lived with his people and placed himself at their head during their long wanderings. He did not attempt "to convert" other nations through Moses to belief in the "only true God," after the fashion in which we today foolishly send out missionaries to "convert" the heathen, but gave the strict order to kill all other nations, including women and children, and to burn the altars of "other Gods." Whenever the Israelites, in the course of the following centuries, failed to obey this order unconditionally, and instead of killing all enemies that fell into their hands, showed mercy unto them, this God grew angry and punished the "stubborn" people because it did not carry out his orders to the letter.

By the way of comparison, you may perhaps think of the Papal State of the Middle Ages, which has also often been called a theocracy. But that was something entirely different. The Pope, who stood at the head of the Papal State as reigning chief or master, was, it is true, the deputy of God, "the representative of Christ on earth." But God himself took no active part in the government of this State, as he did, according to their views, in the case of the Jews. Of course the Pope was "inspired by the Lord," but it was nevertheless his person and his will that ruled, and this "inspiration" was the only divine element that governed his actions.

Altogether different was the position which the Lord held among the Jews; above all, during the forty years in the desert and later on during the following four hundred years in Canaan, God lived in a tent, from which he issued

his commands. He was king, leader, highest judge in one and the same person. Just as a king does not mingle with the people and discuss political matters with every citizen, but is surrounded by his ministers who make his will known to the people, so God remained in his tent and consulted with his prime-minister, Moses, about the affairs of the state. Any matter about which Moses was in doubt, he laid before his Master, as every minister does, and awaited the decision of the king. Even judicial affairs that concerned only single individuals, were decided by God in this way. When, for example, Moses was in doubt as to what to do with a man who had gathered wood on the Sabbath, he kept him under arrest until he had laid the matter before his Master. The Lord decreed that the man be stoned for this offense, a sentence which Moses promptly had executed. In the same way God settled family matters, letting the parties come before his tent and giving them his decision through the mouth of Moses.

*Such was the character of the theocracy of the people of Israel; an absolute monarchy in which the reigning prince was nothing but a phantom created by the delusions and hallucinations of an insane man.*

After the Israelites, under the guidance and influence of this phantom, had wandered about in the desert for half a century, they finally succeeded, after the death of Moses, under the guidance of Joshua, in gaining a footing in the "Promised Land" and settling there permanently.

From the beginning of their historical existence, the Israelites evinced certain characteristic peculiarities which have always differentiated them from other nations. There are three important factors which can be accepted as the cause of this phenomenon.

In the first place the Jews are the only people who can trace their genealogical tree back to one single man and who, therefore, because of their exclusiveness, have always formed one large family. The proselytes, whom the Jews made during the course of time among other nations, formed after all only a small percentage of this people.

The second point in which the Jews differ from all other

nations and which has had no small part in their entire historical development, is that with them the religious and social elements are intimately interwoven and form one entity. The Jewish realm can not be imagined without the Jewish religion. Religion with all its commands, ceremonies, and traditions, is so interwoven with their social institutions that it does not merely represent, as is the case with other nations, one of the various manifestations of their nationality, but that it forms an integral part of the very existence of the people.

The third factor which renders the Israelites different from all other nations is their religion, as such. Their conception of the Deity did not, like that of other nations, originate gradually through symbolizing legends among the people, but was the direct result of insane ideas of a few men. The conception of God as their special Lord and master, as well as the doctrine of "the chosen people" which made them look down with contempt upon every other nation as the natural enemy of God and his people, was therefore bound to lend to the entire nation the appearance of delusions of grandeur which caused them to be different from every other nation.

The coincidence of all these circumstances had a peculiar, partly self-contradictory effect on the people. On the one hand the laws and regulations emanating from a diseased mind were not able to give the nation that strong, solid basis which is an indispensable necessity in the difficult struggle for existence. On the other hand, the circumstances were such that, as history has shown, as a family, or race, or whatever you may choose to call it, the Jews are ineradicable, so that we have here a phenomenon unique in the history of the world, a people that is unable to form a nation for itself, but that as a parasitical people has defied the fiercest persecutions, and in spite of thousands of years of oppression, always manages to get on its feet again, thriving and flourishing if it has the slightest opportunity to do so.

Even during the lifetime of Moses the Levites, the descendants of Levi, were invested "by God" with the priest-

hood, this honor being bestowed upon them as a reward for the eagerness with which they had massacred three thousand of their brethren because these had amused themselves by dancing around a golden calf, while Moses, busied with hallucinations, was spending forty days in solitude on Mount Sinai. The office of High Priest was bestowed on the descendants of Aaron. But the sole ruler and leader of the people remained "God." During nearly a lifetime, for half a century, in consequence of the hallucinations of Moses, the people believed that they received all orders directly from God. Of course, this was not so simple a matter after the death of Moses. The belief which during this long period had become firmly rooted in the people was not so easy to shatter, but the sudden cessation of all direct commands and instructions from God could not fail to have its effect on the conduct of the people.

Just how in detail, in this respect, conditions shaped themselves, during the following four hundred years, we can only conjecture, the accounts extant, concerning this period, being comparatively meager, giving us only a very general survey of this epoch of time.

Great, successful struggles always have the effect of creating momentary happiness and satisfaction in a people—thus the Israelites were in an exalted, contented frame of mind after their victorious battles under Joshua. The enormous contrast between the privations and exertions they had had to endure in the desert and the peaceful life of an agricultural people, of course contributed largely in enhancing the joys of victory, and the Israelites now looked to the future with confidence and hope.

Of course, in all these battles, "God" was the actual commander, Joshua only his general. When they won a battle, it was not an almighty God ruling over all peoples who had "bestowed" the victory upon them, but God himself, at their head, had taken part in the struggle and had fought against the common enemy. Whilst they fought with swords and spears and whips, God used his own weapons, killing the enemy by means of huge hailstones, or destroying them by fire which he sent from Heaven, or by other things

of a like character. But if they were defeated, God, their leader, had brought this about intentionally to punish them for offenses of which they were guilty against his person. Such an offense it was to spare, for any reason, the life of their enemies, or even to live peaceably or mingle with them. This was always a direct insult to God, who demanded that all non-Israelitish nations, with their wives and children, be wiped off the face of the earth.

But no sooner had the people begun to enjoy the fruits of their victories by settling down to till the land and raise cattle as a means of livelihood, than the untenableness of their state and the impossibility of a permanent existence began to make itself felt. God remained the unalterable ruler of the people. But an absolute monarchy, in which the monarch is merely a phantom, which has no actual existence, must of necessity lead to complete anarchy. God made his headquarters in Shiloh where his tent was pitched, but the Levites, the caste of priests, had spread over the whole country proclaiming the will and commands of the Lord. Who, today, can form an idea what mischief was committed, voluntarily and involuntarily, through those "commands of the Lord"? As has already been stated, we have only meager information about these four hundred years, but if we consider only the few circumstances and facts, a description of which has been handed down to us, we cannot fail to get a fairly correct idea of the frightful conditions that must have prevailed there.

In the accounts we always find that "God was indignant at the disobedience of the people," "God determined to punish the people," "God took pity on his people," "God commanded this or that." Everything that occurred was regarded as the work of God, expounded by the priests according to their requirement. That under such conditions there could exist neither harmony nor order among the people, goes without saying. The Israelites quarreled and fought among themselves. They attacked one another, so that one tribe, that of Benjamin, was reduced to six hundred men.

As a natural consequence of these circumstances, they

were continually molested by their neighbors, and several times became the slaves of foreign nations. The Assyrians, the Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites and other nations held the Israelites in subjection, sometimes even for periods as long as several decades.

As a rule, it was after a long period of oppression that "God took pity" on his people and "sent them" a "hero" or a "prophet," to deliver them from their miseries. You may feel assured, that in every case in which "God" "sent" some one to his people, we are dealing with an individual who had delusions and hallucinations, in other words, with a paranoiac.

There can be no doubt that quite a number of mental diseases existed among the Jews at that time. The custom of consanguineous marriage, which was legally demanded of them, certainly had a degenerating effect on the race, so that unquestionably there must have been many cases of paranoia among them. Cases of melancholia were recognized even then as diseased conditions, and we therefore find them sometimes mentioned in the Bible. Paranoiacs, however, particularly when they suffered from religious delusions of grandeur, were not looked upon as diseased in any way. Their delusions and hallucinations were always accepted for what they claimed to be. That the paranoïcal delusions so often presented religious ideas, was due to the conditions of the times. The content of delusions is always determined by the environment of the patient. If, today, a merchant suffers from delusions of grandeur, he imagines he has met with great success in business, he considers himself a multi-millionaire, etc. An artist who is the victim of paranoia looks down with pity on the rest of the world of artists, whose highest ideal only he has attained. Paranoïcal engineers form the great army of misjudged and persecuted inventors. If kings or emperors are afflicted with paranoia, they present the picture which the Germans call "Cæsarenwahn." They obtained their throne "by the grace of God," and believe themselves destined by providence to lead the world into entirely new paths. In every domain

of human endeavor they represent the last and highest authority.

Among a people who lived in the belief that God was their king and that it was chosen above all other nations to be "His people," among whom religion formed the essence and keynote of their whole existence, and constituted the largest part of the mental activity of every individual, among such a people paranoical delusions must necessarily assume a thoroughly religious character.

How many paranoical discussions must have taken place between "God" and insane Hebrews at that time! What may not have happened secretly and publicly through delusions and hallucinations among this people? To get only an approximate idea of the state of affairs at that time is certainly not easy, but if we stop to think how many such cases of paranoia are to be found today in and out of the hospitals for the insane, we will have to admit, without further argument, that the "intercourse with God" at that time must have been a very lively one.

That the Levites who were invested with the priesthood and were spread all over the country, eventually received direct instructions from God, would not be astonishing, and therefore the cases of paranoia that may have existed among them were not necessarily looked upon as anything unusual; but, of course, the many "commands of God" were bound to contain the greatest contradictions, and gradually among the people developed, as has already been stated, a complete anarchy. To this was added the influence of the neighboring nations, whose religious cult corresponded more nearly to the natural character of the people than to doctrines based on delusions and hallucinations. A tangible image of a God, or embodied natural phenomena, appealed to the people far more than an "only, eternal God," who issued all possible commands, but whom the people had never seen nor heard. It was, undoubtedly, largely this circumstance which again and again induced the people to rebellion. On the one hand they were told what God was supposed to have said and done, on the other, they never had ocular or oral evidence of any of this. Why should this



God, who was Master of the people, always reveal himself to only a few persons? Why did he never show himself to the assembled people, inasmuch as he lived in the tent that was erected under his personal supervision? Worshipping their God was an entirely different matter with the neighboring peoples. Among them everything pertaining to the Gods was as visible to one as to another. There were no mysterious revelations made to a few, for here, unlike the condition prevalent among the Jews, hallucinations were not the *conditio sine qua non* of direct intercourse with God.

It was particularly Baal, the supreme God of the neighboring Phœnicians, whom the Israelites worshiped when they became unfaithful to their own God, or also Moloch, whom the Ammonitans revered, and who was probably identical with Baal. The two names have a similar meaning; Baal means "Lord" and Moloch "king." Inasmuch as the Jews also addressed their God as "Lord" (Adonai) it really made no difference whether they prayed to Baal, Moloch, or Adonai.

Of course the ceremonials differed. While the Jews sacrificed only animals to their God, the worshipers of Baal brought human sacrifices also, particularly children. But atrocious as it must appear to us today, to sacrifice human beings to a God, this horrible custom is no worse than following the frequently repeated "command of God," to stone people to death for having done some light work on the Sabbath. More abominable than all this taken together is the so often reiterated "command of God" to mercilessly exterminate all non-Israelitish nations, sparing neither women nor children. This was surely more cruel, more inhuman, and above all things more demoralizing than the rituals demanding human sacrifices.

Nevertheless, this "infidelity to God" is drawn like a red thread through the older Israelitish history and is the mainspring of the public appearance of those "elect," who, through their personal intercourse with God, were given the mission to lead the people back to their "only, eternal God," and, as occasion demanded, in times of oppression, to deliver the people from the yoke of the stranger. It was by no

means only the priests who felt themselves called upon to carry out these missions; it was the "inspired personalities" taken from the midst of the people who were the heroes in time of distress.

Naturally tradition has handed down to us only a few of these "ambassadors of God," only those who actually succeeded in accomplishing something of historical value. There can be not the slightest doubt that there were a great many people who claimed to be "sent by God" to perform certain duties, but who were, nevertheless, unable to accomplish anything.

As it is not our intention to write a continuous history of the Jews, we can spare ourselves the task of going into the lives of all those "ambassadors of God" of that time, such as Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Deborah, Gideon, *et al.* Our task consisting merely in lifting the veil that rests on these mystical "elect of God" and to present these phenomena in their true light, we may content ourselves with making this clear by only a few examples.

At a time when the Israelites were pressed hard by their neighbors, the Midianites, the Amalekites, and several other peoples, they were compelled to take refuge in the mountains, trying to find safety in caves and fortified places. No matter how they struggled and toiled to till the soil that still remained to them, they were unable to prevent a bitter famine from overtaking them, for as soon as the harvest-time approached, their triumphant neighbors were upon them and robbed them of everything which they had raised by the sweat of their brows.

One day, while engaged in threshing corn in a lonely place, safe from the attacks of the enemy, a youth named Gideon beheld "an angel." The angel told him that God was well pleased with him and had chosen him to free his fellow-countrymen from the oppression of their enemies. How was it possible, answered Gideon, that he should have found favor in the eyes of God while he was compelled to thresh corn in hidden places **and live in constant** fear of his oppressors? But the angel **encouraged him** and repeated that Gideon was the one chosen to free the people. Gideon

refused God's offer to make him the savior of his brethren, pleading his low birth and poverty. But when the angel insisted on his accepting God's proposition, Gideon invited him to take a meal with him, and begged for a sign or token that he was the messenger of God. The angel accepted the invitation, and Gideon prepared a little goat for the meal. He put "the flesh in a basket, the broth in a pot," added a few unleavened cakes, and served the whole on a table set out under an oak. But the angel commanded him to bring the food to a nearby rock, and to pour the broth over the meat. As soon as this was done, he touched the food with his staff, whereupon a mighty flame immediately blazed out of the rock, and consumed the entire meal. The angel, however, disappeared in the clouds.

Convinced, by this miracle, that he had really been dealing with an ambassador from Heaven, Gideon began to fear for his life, since phenomena of this kind were at that time looked upon as presaging death. But the angel allowed his voice to be heard again without showing himself, and assured Gideon that no harm should befall him. He erected a monument on that spot in commemoration of this message from God.

During the following night God commanded him to destroy the altar of Baal, and in its place to erect an altar and bring sacrifices to him, which command Gideon punctually carried out.

Just about this time the Midianites had crossed the Jordan, and settled in the valley of Jezreel. In obedience to a divine command, Gideon collected an army, consisting not only of his own people, but also of neighboring branches to whom he had sent ambassadors. The oppressed Israelites were so ready to strike a blow for their freedom that an army of thirty-two thousand men at once gathered around him. This, however, was a very small number compared with the enemy, who numbered one hundred and thirty-five thousand men.

As soon as the combatants had assembled about him, Gideon told them that he had not gathered them together on his own initiative, but had only followed the instructions of

God. To convince them of the truth of his statement, he begged God to perform the following miracle. He laid a woollen cloth on the ground, and asked God to cover the same with dew, but stipulated that the ground around it remain dry. After this had been accomplished, he begged that the surrounding ground be moistened while the cloth remained dry. This request, too, God granted, so that the entire army was convinced of Gideon's divine mission.

Hereupon Gideon started, with his army, to attack the five times greater army of the enemy. But before he reached the place of destination "God foresaw" that the Israelites would credit an eventual victory to their own bravery, and not to the leadership of God, and therefore ordered Gideon to issue a proclamation in which he commanded all those who had the slightest doubt as to the result, to go back. This caused 22,000 men to leave the army, so that the latter was reduced to ten thousand men. But God feared that even by this little band his power might be set in the shade, and to be able to appropriate the entire glory of victory for himself, he ordered Gideon to lead the soldiers to the water, to drink. Those who scooped up water with their hands were to remain with him, but those who lay down so as to lap the water with their tongues, were to be sent back. Because of this occurrence, the army was reduced to three hundred men.

Gideon ordered every one of this little band to provide himself with a trumpet, a lamp and a pitcher. Then he divided them into three divisions and started with them, during the night, on the march against the camp of the enemy. Arrived there, he ordered them to break the pitchers in which the lamps had been hidden, brandish the lamps, and blow all the trumpets. The Midianites, startled and alarmed by this great noise and deceived by the many lights, believed themselves attacked by a great army and were overcome with dismay. In the darkness of the night, roused out of a deep sleep, everything was, naturally, at sixes and sevens, so that in the general confusion the Midianites fought against and killed one another.

After Gideon had, by his maneuver, won an easy and

complete victory over the enemy, he caused those who were trying to flee to be followed, and by guarding the passes, prevented their escape.

He himself followed two kings of the Midianites, made them prisoners, and killed them with his own hands. Two cities of the tribe of Gad, who had refused to harbor Gideon's army, he punished on his return by crushing the princes of one city to death under thorns and hedges, and by murdering all the inhabitants of the other.

Here we have one example of the many "Heaven-born" heroes. Only a brief episode out of the life of this man has been handed down to us by history. But it suffices to give us a distinct picture of his mental condition and to explain scientifically those miracles, visions, and revelations. Any one experienced in psychiatry will at once recognize delusions of grandeur and the resultant hallucinations, and will not hesitate to pronounce the case of "Gideon" one of hallucinatory paranoia.

Any one not prejudiced in favor of the old superstitions, any one having discarded the belief in the existence of angels as messengers sent by God, holding intercourse with the "elect" and making "revelations" to them, must readily recognize a mental disturbance in a case like the one just described. On the one hand, the "divine voices" and the appearance of "angels" are to be explained only by recognizing them as hallucinations; on the other, the entire picture corresponds so exactly to those cases of paranoia which we are called upon to observe today that it is not necessary to look for any other explanation.

The attempt has often been made to differentiate between "visions" and hallucinations. While the latter form a well-known symptom of mental disease, the former were supposed to appear where there is no mental disturbance, as during a period of excitement or in moments of ecstasy. Our experience, however, teaches us that such a differentiation is entirely unjustifiable, especially where we have to deal with a continuous appearance of this phenomenon. But, besides, even in such a case of so-called ecstasy, the "vision" always originated in the brain of the individual, without the

slightest foundation in the outer world. And this is, after all, the point which is of importance to us.

But aside from this, the case of Gideon as pictured in this brief description contains so many characteristic symptoms of paranoia that there can be not the slightest question as to the diagnosis.

With the first appearance of the angel, when he imparted God's resolution to make him the savior of the people, the case shows a remarkable resemblance to the case of Moses. Both at first refused to accept the high and honorable mission offered them because they felt themselves unworthy of such a great honor, and considered themselves unable to carry out such a difficult task.

Such opposition against the content of the hallucinations on their first appearance, we see quite often in cases of paranoia. This phenomenon has often been offered as a proof, that, as was formerly believed, hallucinations are the primary element, while delusions grow only secondarily out of these hallucinations. But this is incorrect. The delusions are always the starting point of the psychopathic process.

What takes place in such a brain may best be described as follows: Long before the appearance of the first hallucination, the individual occupies himself with all possible thoughts and imaginings concerning his personal qualities, his capabilities, his future, etc. He is convinced that he is born to accomplish great things, but how is he to do it?

He fully realizes the difficulties which offer themselves to him. If sufficiently intelligent, he is even conscious of certain deficiencies, as for example, Moses, of the deficiency in his speech. Only with God's support would it be possible for him to reach the great goal. But even then, something might possibly occur to make it exceedingly difficult for him. His low origin, his poverty, would hinder him from gaining the confidence and respect of his fellow-citizens. After such thoughts had passed through his mind again and again, an angel appears to him one day, and informs him of God's intention to make him the savior of his people. This hallucination is evidently the consequence of the previous de-

lusions, and the attitude of refusal which existed at first is not at all a contradiction of this, but furnishes a further characterization of this particular form of insanity.

Aside from the hallucinations, Gideon's mode of action was such as is irreconcilable with mental soundness. After gathering about him an army of thirty-two thousand men, he sent nearly all of them home again, all but three hundred men, because God wished to keep the glory and honor of victory for himself.

He did not even select the strongest and best men, but took those who drank the water of the stream in a certain manner. Absurd as such things appear in a normal human being, they are characteristic of a paranoiac. The attack at night, and the deception of the enemy by means of many lights and great noise is a strategic trick which was followed by good results, but which by no means points against the existence of paranoia.

His fanatic attitude towards his own fellow-citizens, who must have taken him for an adventurer and refused to entertain his followers, is again characteristic of his abnormal mental condition. What normal man would, like Gideon, after an enormous victory over the enemy, destroy a whole city full of his own people, sparing neither women nor children?

Many people entertain the naïve idea that a person can not be said to be insane, when his actions accrue to the benefit of his fellowmen. Such a view is, of course, entirely unscientific. A psychiatrist must never judge of an action by its results. In spite of his delusions, a paranoiac can accomplish much that is useful, if he has the ability to do so; even the delusions themselves may give rise to useful actions, as the above case proves. That Gideon did his people a great service, in freeing them from forty years' bondage to the Midianites, no one can deny. But that does not alter the fact that all his actions in this affair were the result of his mental disturbance.

If one looks at the matter in the right light, it was after all only a lucky accident that this night attack on the immense army of the enemy turned out so successfully.

Gideon can show no really great achievement. Only the result was great, which is, after all, the main thing with the uneducated masses, and which in this case, as in so many others in history, makes a hero of an absolutely unimportant or, in this instance, of an insane person.

The "revelations," so frequently mentioned in the Bible, are always founded on hallucinations of insane individuals. But, to play a great role in the public life of the people, to rule the people for decades, as Moses did, or to exercise an unusual influence on the people or on its leaders, it was not enough merely to be a paranoiac and have hallucinations. It required a man of particular mental ability combined with this psychical abnormality, a combination of psychical factors, which is relatively rare. Thus it happened that there were often periods of time in the history of the Israelites, during which, it is said in the Bible, "the revelations occurred very seldom."

Such a period preceded the birth of a man who, in many respects, was to be of great importance to the historical and particularly the ethical development of the people—namely, Samuel.

Dedicated by his mother to the service of the temple, Samuel, from his earliest youth, was surrounded by religious affairs. Already as a boy, he had hallucinations. He heard his name called, without knowing whence came the voice he heard. Therefore the priest Eli explained to him, that this was the voice of God, who had evidently chosen him as his "elect." Here we have a striking example of how delusions and hallucinations are influenced by environment, and how their form and content conform to the prevailing circumstances.

Samuel heard the "voice of God" more and more often, until he was in continual intercourse with God. What distinguished the case of Samuel from the cases we have already described, is the circumstance that he evidently had only hallucinations of hearing. God only spoke to him, but never gave him any visual signs or sent any "angels" to him. This is a phenomenon which is altogether characteristic of the nature of paranoia. Delusions can exist without hal-



lucinations, and in case there are any of the latter, they can be those of one or several of the senses. If only one sense is affected in this way, it is nearly always, as in the present case, the organ of hearing in which the hallucinations are to be found.

As Eli's successor, Samuel became the leader of civil as well as religious matters. But the condition of affairs of state must, in time, have become so unbearable, that the people, longing for order, begged him to give them a king, such as other nations had.

The manner in which Samuel acted in response to this desire of the people, as well as his hallucinations in regard to it, are exceedingly interesting and characteristic of his mental condition. First of all, he repudiates the demand of the people, with scorn, as there could be no king over Israel but "God, the Lord." But when he complained to God of his distress over the disloyalty of the people, God consoled him, pointing out that the insult was far less his, Samuel's, than God's. The people, said the Lord, had always shown themselves ungrateful to him, since the time when he had delivered them from slavery in Egypt, but that the time would come when they would regret their conduct towards him, and then it would be too late. If the people, so God continued, insisted on their demand, even after Samuel pointed out to them the disadvantages of a kingdom, then Samuel was to gratify their wishes and give them a king.

This "speech of God" is again a pretty example of how hallucinations can adjust themselves to circumstances. The scorn over the insult to God on the one hand, and the demand of the people, on the other, led to this compromise with God, who now himself advised the kingdom.

Of the immense influence which mental diseases have had, in the course of history, no one can have even an approximate knowledge. Here we have an unquestionably insane person, with delusions and hallucinations, a paranoiac, who, only because of his delusions, made two persons, one after the other, king of the people. What kind of kings were these! The first of the two, Saul, is a man with-

out the slightest merit. The only advantage he had, was his physical height. He was taller than his fellow-citizens, and for that reason the insane Samuel anointed him king. An uncouth dolt, he was sent out by his father to catch some asses that had run away, and because, while on this search for asses, he also came upon Samuel, the latter recognized in him the "elect of God" whom God commanded him to anoint as king over "his people."

To relate the history of Saul at this place, is unnecessary. His vicious character, his inability to rule as king over a people, needs no assertion. History presents him as insane from time to time. He most probably suffered from an affection which is, today, called circulatory insanity, or manic, depressive, insanity. Conditions of melancholic depression alternate, in this disease, with maniacal excitement, during which the patient often commits the most violent and brutal acts. Such was the "elect of God," whom God himself commanded to be anointed king.

So long as Samuel reigned alone as the representative of God, his delusions never caused him to come in conflict with any one. But as soon as an anointed king ruled over the people, Samuel's paranoia necessarily made a collision imminent.

When Saul had collected the Hebrews at Gilgal, to march against the Philistines, Samuel did not appear at the proper time, to perform the necessary sacrifices. After waiting in vain for seven days, and believing himself threatened by the enemy, Saul deemed it best to attend to the sacrifices himself. No sooner was this done, than Samuel arrived, and not only reproached the king vehemently for his unwarranted sacrificings, but informed him that, because of this act, God had decided to take the kingdom away from him and give it to one more worthy. Nothing could be more characteristic of Samuel's paranoia. No sooner had God chosen one king to rule over his people, than, because of an unauthorized sacrifice, he gives the kingdom to another.

The relation between Samuel, living in continual intercourse with God, receiving and acting upon his commands, and Saul the anointed king of Israel, is altogether too ridi-

culous. Samuel gives his commands, based on delusions and hallucinations, and Saul, like an obedient king in a comic opera, must dance to the whistling of this insane Jew. Thus Samuel commands: "Take the field against the Amalekites, and destroy them entirely, sparing not a single human being. Kill all the women and children and babies, oxen and sheep, camels and asses." God issued this praiseworthy command, because four hundred years ago, Amalek had dared to oppose the "chosen people of God."

Obediently, the king sets out against the Amalekites. He conquers them, and proceeds to carry out God's command to destroy everything. Only the life of king Agag, whom Saul had taken prisoner, was spared. Besides this he saved the sheep, oxen, and cows which were sound, and killed only those animals that could not be used. But when Samuel came and heard the bleating of the animals, he fell into a terrible rage over the disobedience of the wicked king, and at once informed him, that, because of this unheard of sacrilege, namely, sparing the lives of the Amalekites' oxen and sheep, God had resolved to take the throne from him and give it to a worthier person.

Thereupon Samuel had Agag, the king of the Amalekites, brought before him, and with his sword hacked him to pieces in honor of God the Lord, who now "regretted" deeply ever having made Saul king over Israel.<sup>7</sup>

God was so annoyed over the fact that the sheep and oxen, belonging to the Amalekites, had not been destroyed, as he had commanded, that he ordered his friend Samuel to anoint another king. "Fill thine horn with oil," said God, "I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons."<sup>8</sup>

How it is, that the delusions of Samuel assumed the form that God had chosen a son of Jesse in Bethlehem to be his king, we are unable to ascertain today. Samuel, evidently, had never seen Jesse nor his sons. Therefore, without the slightest logical reason, this paranoiac goes to Bethlehem, and there anoints as king of Israel a man who

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<sup>7</sup>Samuel, xv: 35.   <sup>8</sup>I. Samuel xvi: 1.

at the moment was engaged in tending sheep. Such an act, according to the generally accepted ideas of right and wrong in all countries and at all times in history, is considered high treason, and punished by death. But, among the Jews, the hallucinations of insane priests were of such religious importance and had such an enormous influence on the entire public life of the people, that not only they, but the very king against whom the high-treason was planned, in fear and reverence acquiesced to the decision of "God's Prophet."

Insane persons have influenced the course of history in other nations, too, particularly in ancient times. It is well known that many of the Roman emperors were insane and subjected the people to their diseased ideas and impulses. But that a whole nation is governed exclusively for centuries by the delusions of insane persons; that not only their religious conceptions, but their entire political life should have been formed by mentally diseased men; of this the history of the Jews offers a unique and unparalleled example.

Here we have an insane man, who, as a consequence of his delusions, enthrones and dethrones kings without any one's even daring to question his authority, or his divine mission.

What attaches special importance to Samuel is the fact that in him we have the first "prophet" of the Jews, and that he was the founder of the school of prophets.

According to its etymological origin, the word "prophet" means some one who, as a mediator, speaks for another person. Among the Jews, it was especially a man who spoke at the command of God, who was called a "prophet," entirely without attributing to the word the meaning of predicting coming events. That this "divine command" was based on delusions and hallucinations, no doubt has been made sufficiently clear by the foregoing explanations. Predicting future events was only one part of the divine revelations, and after all, this consisted mainly in the announcement of punishment for sins against the Deity. Thus, Samuel "prophesied" that the sons of Eli

would not remain in the position they then occupied, that God would take the throne from Saul, and instead of giving it to one of his sons, would reward some one else with it. These "prophecies," it is true, have been realized, but for the simple reason that the prophecy as well as the actual occurrences were created, in like manner, by the delusions and hallucinations of the mentally unbalanced Samuel. His announcement that God commanded him to anoint David a king, robbed the sons of Saul of the royal throne, and the fulfilment of this prophecy was, therefore, not wonderful.

Samuel was, at one and the same time, judge, priest, and prophet, though later on this custom was not continued. Prophet and priest were two entirely different things, absolutely independent of each other. In the schools of the prophets, founded by Samuel in Jericho, Gilgal, and Bethlehem, the young prophets lived together, were content with poor food and clothing, and busied themselves with poetry and songs. Though their chief duty was the cultivation of religious ideas, they appeared as public lecturers and orators, and offered the people their aid and advice. They also cultivated literature in the capacity of poets and historians of their people.

Entirely different from these scholastic prophets are those who, through their own mental processes, entered into direct communication with God, and, like Moses and Samuel, received direct revelations and commands from him. The latter are the ones who, like Samuel, acquired an enormous influence over the lives and political affairs of the people, and who are of especial interest to us. After the foregoing explanations it is hardly necessary to prove in every particular case of these "ambassadors of God," that we are dealing with a mental disorder, with delusions and hallucinations.

Whoever has carefully followed the foregoing expositions will now himself be able to recognize the insanity of all those great prophets. He will not allow himself to be misled by the fact that these same prophets were marveled at and revered by some of their contemporaries as "Messengers of God," nor by the fact that the "Prophets" up to

the present day have been admired as "superhuman geniuses" or such like. Furthermore, he can not fail to recognize that their real mental capacity, was as a rule quite insignificant, that all their thoughts and actions were guided by delusions and hallucinations, and that today persons in such a mental condition are considered insane.

All the writings of the Prophets, from Isaiah and Jeremiah to Malachi, represent nothing but the confused and incoherent manifestations of an unbalanced mind. Delusions of grandeur, delusions of persecution, hallucinations in every organ of sense, as well as a vast amount of other psychopathic phenomena, are to be found in almost every line of these wild ravings. If, for the purpose of proving that the Prophets were paranoiacs, we were to select characteristic examples from their writings, we would have to give "the Prophets" of the Bible from beginning to end, inasmuch as this mental abnormality manifests itself in every chapter of these endless scribbblings.

## VII. THE PHENOMENON "JESUS CHRIST."

### 1.—THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

It is as impossible to find an occurrence or a phenomenon that occurs once and once only in the history of man, as it is in the infinity of Nature. There is no such thing as a unicum in the world. The most wonderful phenomena of Nature, no matter how peculiar they may appear, can always be traced back to analogous manifestations.

The old adage: "History repeats itself" is not based on mere accident. The thoughts and ideas of single individuals, which, after all, are at the bottom of all historical events, represent a product of Nature, like all the other processes in the world, and are, therefore, like them, governed by certain rules and laws. Neither in the relation of single individuals to each other, nor in the mutual relation of different nations, nor in the influence that single distinguished men exerted on the course of history, is there to be found an occurrence which may be called unique, of which in the course of time analogous manifestations can not be found.

Like every rule, this one, too, is proven by the "one exception." There is one occurrence which stands unique in the records of the world, for which the history of all nations has no analogy.

Two thousand years ago, in the midst of an insignificant people in the Orient, which, like all the other nations around the Mediterranean Sea, was under the mighty yoke of the all-powerful Roman Empire, there lived a man who called himself the "Son of God," who proclaimed a new faith

and a new religion. Step by step, his doctrine gradually conquered the world. During all the centuries that have passed since then nearly all the acts and endeavors of mankind have centered about this one man—to expound his sayings, to study his life and to propagate his teachings. Millions and millions of people have devoted their entire life to the study of his doctrine. Ravaging wars have been fought because of this man. Millions of people have been tortured and put to death for merely arousing the suspicion that they questioned, ever so faintly, a single one of his utterances. And even today, after two thousand years, very nearly the entire civilized world believes in the divinity of this man, and reveres in him the Ruler of the universe, the Lord and Judge of mankind.

This is a case for which history offers no parallel. There have been heroes, who conquered the world; there have been great geniuses who opened for man new fields of development and culture; there were even men whom their contemporaries and also posterity worshiped as divine beings. But all this is nothing in comparison to the position which Christ has occupied, nothing in comparison to the influence his person and his doctrine have exercised on mankind up to the present day.

The fact that a person born in humble circumstances has been worshiped as a God, throughout the entire civilized world for two thousand years, that every one looks up to and prays to him and adores in him the Lord and "Savior" of mankind—this is a phenomenon for which there is no analogy, a manifestation, absolutely unique in the history of all the nations of the earth.

For his contemporaries as well as for those who came after Christ, there could be only one alternative in judging of his person. Either one had to believe blindly everything he proclaimed, one had to recognize in him the Lord of the universe, one had to accept him as the Son of God and believe that he was sent as his messenger by the "Father," and that the latter had imparted his commands and orders to him, one had to believe that he had seen and heard the "Father" in Heaven, that he himself was older than the



world, that he had associated with angels and the devil, one had to believe in the doctrine that in spite of the division of Father and Son, there still was only one God, Father and Son added together, making only one—nay, that even a third factor, the Holy Ghost, formed part of this peculiar unit. All this had to be accepted blindly, believed in without question, or one had to discredit it all, that is, one had to believe that Christ intentionally spoke and taught what he knew to be false, in other words, that he was an adventurer, a swindler. A third possibility can not be imagined. Of course not! How could the great masses, or even the so-called scientists, imagine anything except that all his assertions were either true or untrue?

The latter version we can repudiate with absolute certainty. Christ was thoroughly honest and was himself convinced of the truth of every word he uttered. This can unquestionably be proven from his whole conduct as well as from the attitude of his contemporaries and the accounts that have been handed down to us.

An adventurer, no matter how great his genius, could never have obtained such an influence on the great masses of the people. Just in his own belief in himself lay his immeasurable power and influence. The people believed in him, because he did so himself.

Whoever came in contact with him saw that his intentions were honest and that he was no impostor. Pilate washed his hands before the people, to purge himself of the blood of the "all-righteous one." The Roman Captain said, "Certainly this was a righteous man."<sup>9</sup> Even among the Pharisees were some who believed in his divinity, for they could not take him for a swindler, and there remained no alternative.

His entire behavior is irreconcilable with that of an adventurer. A person who makes his whole life a fraud and deception must, above all things else, have a motive for so doing. He must gain some advantage from his deceit, or at least attempt to do so. Christ, on the contrary,

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<sup>9</sup>Luke xxiii: 47.

lived in poverty, and never made an attempt to derive material benefit or other personal gain from the situation and condition of affairs.

We therefore find ourselves confronted by the highly important and no less interesting question: How can we, today, from a scientific viewpoint, explain the phenomenon, Christ?

On the one hand, we are convinced and can bring positive proofs that Christ was anything but a fraud, that on the contrary, he himself was absolutely convinced of the truth of every word he spoke. He believed himself the Son of God, and was convinced that with God he formed one being, one God. He believed himself "sent" by the "Heavenly Father." He had heard his voice and had seen his face. He had been in constant communication with him, and had received his direct commands and instructions. He had associated with angels and had come in direct contact with the devil. He had lived in Heaven and had visited Hell, and could give definite accounts of both institutions. Of all this Christ was fully convinced. All this he had actually seen and heard. To him these were not the poetical creations of a lively fancy—they were real, naked truths.

On the other hand, we know today that all these things do not exist in reality. We know that there is no "God," that the doctrines of an "only, eternal God" originated in the diseased brain of an insane Hebrew. If there is no God, there can be no son of God. We know that there are neither angels nor devils, and that the ideas of Heaven and Hell can not be reconciled with scientific facts. For us, the doctrine of an individual life after death is an impossibility. We can not believe in an eternal blessedness any more than we can in perpetual damnation with "howling and gnashing of teeth." All these are pictures, drawn by the human imagination, like Olympus and Tartarus of the Greeks, like the "eternal Gods" of all the ancient nations in history.

To judge correctly of this remarkable phenomenon, the appearance of Christ and his enormous influence on all

mankind, it is not sufficient to study the character and manifestations of this one man, but one must keep in mind the entire milieu, his contemporaries, the condition of political affairs, historical development, etc.

A people which devoted its greatest mental activity exclusively to the study of those holy scriptures, which were based on delusions and hallucinations, whose leading men found their highest purpose in analyzing and propounding these traditional creations of disturbed minds, a people whose leaders cudgeled their brains about how many rungs there were in the "ladder" which Jacob saw in his dream, and of what kind of wood these were made—such a people must necessarily perish in the struggle for existence and make room for its warlike neighbors.

Thus it happened, that the "chosen people" were dragged into captivity and for many years suffered from subjection and oppression. All that the Jews, as a nation, retained, was their religious faith, the belief in an only eternal God, as conceived in Abraham's delusions and "revealed" in the hallucinations of insane Hebrews.

In times of misery and want, it lies in human nature to hope for a brighter future; so the Jews, too, looked forward to better times, hoping to be freed from oppression and to see their once proud kingdom restored.

What in the people was only a desire and hope, for the fulfillment of which they offered the most devout prayers, in the delusionary ideas of the insane Prophets assumed a concrete form and appeared to them as reality. In their hallucinatory dialogues with "God, the Lord," they were informed that the people would be set free by a personal "Savior." They were promised a new kingdom, at the head of which there was to be a king to whom all other kings and all the nations of the earth would be subservient.

The content of paranoiac delusions is determined, as has been set forth in the chapter relating to this, by the views of life, as well as the environment and the education of the individual. Today paranoiacs, suffering from delusions of grandeur, as a rule believe themselves to be "great inventors," "famous artists," "influential politicians," or some-

thing else of this sort. At a time, and among a people, whose every thought centered about the "only, eternal God," when everything that was called culture, art, and science was directed towards this object, it was only natural that the content of the delusions of the insane, too, should be filled with this idea, and that paranoiacs believed themselves the "messengers" or "confidants" of the "one and only God." The endless dialogues between God and the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, *et al.*, in which we always find, "Thus spake the Lord of Hosts," are, of course, nothing but ordinary hallucinations of hearing. The highest position which a paranoiac could imagine for himself was, naturally, that of confidant or ambassador of God. The idea of raising themselves to the position of Gods never found birth even in the paranoiacal brains of the "great Prophets." They were satisfied to announce the "will of God" and to act as intermediaries between God and men.

The entire population being permeated by the idea of a great hero, a rescuer from misery, a savior from oppression, and everybody looking forward not only to the restoration of the mighty Jewish empire, but dreaming of a powerful kingdom which was to extend over the whole earth, the delusions of the "Prophets" had necessarily to be filled with the same ideas. Through their hallucinations of hearing, they heard how God himself described the power and glory of the future kingdom and pictured the strength of the hero, who, sitting on David's throne, was to rule over this wonderful realm.

Thus, for example, we find: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Isaiah. ix: 6-7.

With such ideas the Jewish people were filled, dreaming of freedom, fame, and glory, when Jesus Christ first saw the light of day.

All that we know of his personality, his utterances, his doctrine, his views, and his mode of life, we owe to the records of the four Evangelists. Thousands and thousands of commentaries have been written, in the course of centuries, about the Gospel. We find every possible opinion concerning the reliability and trustworthiness of these writings. On the one hand, we find the orthodox conviction that every word of the Gospel is absolutely true. According to this view, "God inspired" the Evangelists, or even dictated their writings himself. On the other hand, these accounts are largely considered figurative or metaphorical dissertations, founded only partly on historical facts. It is the same with the utterances of Christ. Some take everything literally, word for word, without admitting any interpretation, while others believe that in many of his utterances they recognize symbolic representations, founded on profoundly philosophical views.

The symbolic theory is, of course, very convenient, inasmuch as everything imaginable can be put into these writings by interpreting them symbolically, while everything that is inconvenient can thereby be smoothed over and accounted for. Some have gone so far in their scepticism toward the Gospel that they have denied the existence of Christ altogether, regarding the whole story as a poetical creation of the imagination. This latter view is absurd. It is not only an unquestionable fact that Jesus Christ really lived, but we have abundant reasons to accept the accounts of the four Evangelists as the actual truth.

In spite of the fact that Christ himself left us no documentary proof of his life, and that, furthermore, such a great span of time as nearly a century and a half elapsed between him and the Evangelists, we can safely assume that every sentence of the Gospel rests on the solid foundation of a historical fact, and that the utterances of Christ in particular are based on absolute truth.

Even though these accounts were maintained for several

generations by oral tradition only, we still must bear in mind that those men, the Evangelists, as well as their ancestors to whom they owed their knowledge, devoted their entire lives to the study of those facts, that all their endeavors, all their thoughts and acts were concentrated on this subject. We must bear in mind the enormous impression that Christ's personality and his every word made on those men, who, during his life, became his adherents and called themselves after him "Christians." We must remember that it was not a mere narrative by means of which those facts were handed down from generation to generation, but that those people, during their whole lives, knew of hardly anything else about which to speak, that every word spoken by Christ was an oracle to them, and that their very souls were filled with these things. Under such conditions the oral tradition is, in many respects, far more reliable than the contemporary records of one or even more individuals. Furthermore, we must not forget that, though the writings of the four Evangelists were compiled independently of one another, they agree almost entirely, at least in the points of real importance.

What, in our estimation, forms a much stronger proof of the truth of the Gospel than anything else, is the fact that the entire psychical manifestations of Jesus Christ represent a certain mental condition, to be analyzed at once, which is so characteristic and typical in every respect, that it seems utterly impossible that these occurrences could have been invented by any one. Were the representation of a "Messiah" of a "Savior of man," the "King of Heaven," made the subject of poetical imagination, the hero of this drama would certainly have been altogether different from Jesus Christ as described by the Evangelists. In him we recognize a picture so typical, so characteristic in every respect of the psychical condition under discussion, that for us, the personality of Jesus Christ in itself offers nothing "wonderful" or "inexplicable," that, on the contrary, all his manifestations can be explained entirely satisfactorily by purely scientific facts.

Besides, we find the existence of Christ, as well as sev-

eral accompanying circumstances mentioned by the Evangelists, referred to several times in the writings of other contemporaneous authors. Pliny mentions, in his *Historia Naturalis*, "the wonderful star," which was supposed to have announced the birth of Christ, as a "bright comet." The slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem is mentioned in Dion's *Life of Octavius Cæsar*, and is more fully described by Maciabus. Pliny Junior, Tacitus, and Suetonius refer to Jesus Christ in their writings. The eclipse of the sun and the earthquake are reported by Pliny and Suetonius. Flavius Josephus mentions Christ as follows: "About this time lived a wise man, Jesus by name, if it is permissible to call him a man; for he accomplished great miracles, and became the teacher of all such peoples who recognized and embraced the truth with gladness. He made many Jews and strangers his followers. He was Christ. When Pilatus, acting on the advice of important people of Rome, condemned him to be crucified, those who loved him did not desert him; for after three days he reappeared before them, alive. This and ten thousand other miraculous things had been foretold of him by the divine Prophets. The Christians, a sect that called themselves after him, exist today yet."<sup>11</sup>

A fact of special importance to us, but which is generally hardly appreciated, is that the four Evangelists concerned themselves with only three years of the entire life of Jesus Christ. With the exception of the well-known events, which preceded and immediately followed his birth, as well as the circumstance that at twelve years of age he astonished the doctors in the temple by his knowledge of the Scriptures, his life up to his thirtieth year is shrouded in darkness. Besides the fact that he worked in his father's carpenter shop, not a single fact pertaining to his life is mentioned, until he returned from Galilee to Jerusalem and allowed himself to be baptized by John. At that time he was thirty years old, and three years later he was crucified. The entire Gospel covers just these three years.

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<sup>11</sup>Antique d. Jud. iii:3.

Like Moses and Elias, he spent "forty days" in the wilderness, where he associated with angels and devils, and where "God revealed himself" to him.

The many "miracles" which aroused the enthusiasm of the masses for him, consisted chiefly in "healing" the sick, in relieving physical infirmities, such as lameness, deafness, mutism, blindness, etc., in the exorcism of "evil spirits" and even in awakening the dead.

The "doctrines" contained in his sermons deal, in great measure, with the "Kingdom of Heaven," whose "King" he was, with the way on which alone it was possible to enter this kingdom, with the manner in which he, the King, the Son of God, God himself, was to be worshiped, so as to gain eternal salvation, how the "Father" had sent him, so that he should become the Savior of Mankind, how all who believed in him would be blessed with immortality, while those who denied him would be banished to the Kingdom of Hell, where were "howling and gnashing of teeth." He was, according to his doctrines, the Messiah, whom the Prophets had foretold; he was that hero, that Savior, who, in all the writings, had been promised to the people, and for whom the people so ardently had longed.

As said before, Christ had either to be accepted as the Son of God, the King of the Kingdom of Heaven, at his own valuation, or all his statements had to be looked upon as the blasphemous utterances of a base impostor. The great mass of the people, the rabble, did the former, and welcomed in him the Messiah. For this very reason he appeared the more dangerous to those who did not believe in him, to the priests and leaders of the people.

At that time, educated persons could just as little believe that this thirty years old son of a carpenter was a king and a God, as we today would believe any one who professed such things. If today a person regarded himself as God—as frequently enough happens—no educated person would be apt to believe him; yet, strangely enough, these same "educated people" who would not believe such a statement, made by any one today, nevertheless believe the



one, made two thousand years ago by the son of a Jewish carpenter.

People of education and culture naturally did not believe in him and considered him an impostor. In this they did him a great injustice. Jesus Christ was anything but a fraud or impostor. He was fully convinced of the truth of every word he uttered, and his horrible death will remain an eternal disgrace in the history of nations, just like so many other millions of murders that have been committed through religious fanaticism in the course of centuries.

If today a person proclaims himself God, or the son of God, or if the son of a carpenter imagines himself a king, every layman, even the most uneducated, will say: "This person is insane." Conditions were not different, in this respect, two thousand years ago from what they are today. "Divine" sons of carpenters existed as little then as they do now; the laws of nature were the same then as they are today. Among the Jews, at that time, undoubtedly many mental diseases, which we see today, existed, with only this difference, that at that time they were not recognized as such. No one had dreamed of the possibility that a person who talked logically and connectedly, who even appeared intelligent and cultured, could at the same time be suffering from an incurable mental disease, but nevertheless there were many such cases. If persons suffered from delusions of grandeur and were at the same time intellectually gifted, they were accepted as Prophets, or messengers of God. If, on the other hand, they were the victims of delusions of persecution, they were supposed to be possessed of the devil or pursued by the spirits of revenge, as by the Greek Eumenides.

Christ believed in his own divinity; he was convinced of the truth of every word he said. That vindicates his honor, freeing him of the suspicion of having been an impostor, but it proves that he was insane.

To this one may perhaps reply that in view of the widely spread superstition of those times it would not be fair to call everybody insane who for some reason or other believed himself to be a God. This is true, at least to a certain

extent, and we would assuredly not make this diagnosis, if we had nothing else on which to base it. But Christ offers in every respect an absolutely typical picture of a well-known mental disease. All that we know of him corresponds so exactly to the clinical aspect of paranoia, that it is hardly conceivable how anybody at all acquainted with mental disorders, can entertain the slightest doubt as to the correctness of the diagnosis. Besides this, it is utterly impossible to offer any other rational explanation of the extraordinary manifestations of Christ, while, on the other hand, this diagnosis explains in a strictly scientific manner all these wonderful occurrences, lifting the veil of mysticism from an absolutely unique phenomenon in the history of mankind, for which hitherto no satisfactory interpretation could be given.

Christ belongs to those cases of paranoia in which the patients are quiet and self-engrossed during their youth. Often, as in this case, they show unusual mental ability, and are frequently regarded as prodigies. Christ must have spent most of his life in studying the "holy Scriptures." Already at the age of twelve his knowledge of them was such that he astonished the scribes and aroused their admiration. His frequent quotations from the old writings, as well as from those of the Prophets, gave evidence of the diligence with which he had studied them.

Anyone acquainted with the writings of the insane Prophets, any one who has been able to read through this endless chaos of delusions, these incoherent products of a hallucinatory delirium, must be able to realize what a pernicious influence the eager study of them must have exercised on a juvenile mind, predisposed itself to psychopathic conditions.

Slowly, at first imperceptibly to his friends, the delusions developed in the brain of this gentle youth. At what time they made their first appearance, and when they began to develop into systematized ideas, we are, of course, unable to ascertain today, having absolutely no accounts of the first thirty years of his life.

Christ having lived all these years in comparative seclusion, we may safely assume that his delusions were more or less latent, and had not developed sufficiently to rise to self-consciousness. Had he already at that time a clear conception that he was the "son of God" and that "the Father" had sent him into the world to save mankind, he would certainly not have remained idle for so long a period. He obviously constituted one of those cases, where the isolated and disconnected delusions required an external stimulant and a strong emotion to systematize themselves into a typical paranoïcal structure.

Such a stimulant Christ obtained from another paranoïac, from John the Baptist. Like all other Prophets, John considered himself a "messenger" from God. Imagining himself Elias, or imitating him, he girded his loins with a leather girdle,<sup>12</sup> made himself a garment of camel's hair and lived on locusts and wild honey. His delusions, too, were, like those of the other "Prophets," centered in the "Kingdom of Heaven" and the coming Messiah. After truly paranoïcal fashion, he applied certain passages in the writings of the Prophets to his own person, as for example: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."<sup>13</sup>

He recognized in himself the elect of God, chosen to "prepare the way" for the Messiah. Therefore he said to the people: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, his shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."<sup>14</sup>

This announcement was certainly not made with reference to Jesus, whom at the time he in all probability did not even know, but was only an allusion to the expected Savior, whose forerunner he believed himself to be. That this was so, is unquestionably proven by the fact that a considerable time later, when he was in prison, he sent his disciples to Jesus, who, in the meantime, had become famous for his

<sup>12</sup>2 Kings i:8.      <sup>13</sup>Isa. xl:3.

<sup>14</sup>Matt. iii:11; Mark i:8; John 1:26.

"miracles," and asked him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we wait for another?"

Jesus' delusions had fully matured by this time, and when he heard of the "forerunner of the Messiah" who baptized sinful humanity in the river Jordan, that is, purged them of their sins and made them worthy to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, he, too, went there to be baptized.

The hallucinations of paranoiacs are always, one might say, materialized delusions. For example, a person who has suffered for years from delusions of persecution, who believes himself despised and denounced by his fellowmen, one day hears "quite distinctly" how the people in the street call him obscene names. Here the hallucinations of hearing represent a materialization of previous delusions.

Jesus experienced something very much like this at the instant, when in the presence of the people he was baptized by John, and was thereby aroused to a condition of intense emotional excitement.

The delusion which had so long possessed him, that he was the Son of God, sent by him to become the Savior of mankind, was now converted into hallucinations of sight and hearing. "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the Heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from Heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."<sup>16</sup>

Following the example of Moses, Elias and the locust-eating John, Jesus went for "forty days" into the wilderness, or as it is put in the Gospel, "he was driven by the spirit into the wilderness."

This sojourn of forty days in the wilderness is of the greatest interest to us. These forty days lie between two fundamentally different periods in the life of Jesus. The thirty years that preceded the sojourn in the wilderness Jesus spent in seclusion in the home of his parents.

After forty days he returned from the wilderness, a different person. Now he appeared before the public with

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<sup>16</sup>Mark i: 10, 11.

all his "miracles," with his doctrines and revelations. He now announced that "the Kingdom of God" had come, and that he, the Son of God, the King, sat on the throne, ruling over all the nations of the earth.

What an enormous change must have taken place in his mental condition during these forty days! The delusions, until then isolated and disconnected, had expanded and combined and formed themselves henceforth into a great systematized structure. Undoubtedly he had continuous discussions during that time with God, the Father, who "sent" him, and whose "doctrines" he preached. Such a course of the disease, a transition from the latent to the active state of paranoia, is altogether characteristic of this psychosis.

The episode in the wilderness is of equally great importance regarding the question whether Jesus was an impostor who represented himself as the Son of God with the intention to deceive the people. Is it possible that a person who intends to play the role of God, should assert that he had been tempted by the devil? Can God, as he was and still is represented to men, be tempted by the devil? Would an impostor make such a palpable and foolish mistake? While on the other hand, contradictions like this are not at all at variance with paranoia, but, are on the contrary, quite in accordance with the character of the disease. The refined subtlety with which theologians manage to get around such difficulties, is altogether too amusing.

Furthermore, what could be more ridiculous than that "God," or the "Son of God," purified himself of his sins, by being baptized by John? What conception of God can one have, when the "Holy Ghost" in the form of a dove, lets himself down on "the Son of God?" Does a God need such a Holy Ghost? Is not God sufficiently "Holy Ghost" in himself? An intelligent impostor would never have contrived such absurdities, while contradictions like these are entirely characteristic of a paranoiac.

In the great drama which the appearance of Christ offered to the world, and which extended over a period of three years, the centre on which everything was concen-

trated, was his immeasurable perpetually increasing delusions of grandeur. All his speeches, doctrines, and sermons culminated in the one word "I." I am the King of Heaven, I am the Savior of man, I am the Son of God, I and God are one, Whoever believes in me will be saved, Whoever follows me will enter the kingdom of Heaven, I am the light of the world; I, I, and always I.

In answer to the question put to him by his disciples: "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" he answered: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."<sup>16</sup> "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."<sup>17</sup> "For I came down from Heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."<sup>18</sup> "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."<sup>19</sup>

Because of their importance, we will have to quote, in toto, the following passages:

"He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said unto them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my body is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is the bread which

<sup>16</sup>John vi: 29. \* <sup>17</sup>John vi: 35.

<sup>18</sup>John vi: 38. <sup>19</sup>John vi: 40.

came down from Heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."<sup>20</sup>

This is the typical chatter of a paranoiac than which nothing more characteristic can be imagined. The following are further examples of his delusions of grandeur:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken! And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes on the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."<sup>21</sup>

Any one, having only the least experience in mental diseases, must recognize paranoia in utterances such as these. Even the educated layman must see that such effusions can be the product only of a diseased brain.

Here follow further illustrations of his delusions of grandeur:

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."<sup>22</sup> "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."<sup>23</sup> "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."<sup>24</sup> "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."<sup>25</sup> And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."<sup>26</sup> "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men into me."<sup>27</sup> "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather

<sup>20</sup>John vi: 47-58.

<sup>22</sup>John viii: 12.

<sup>26</sup>John xiv: 13.

<sup>21</sup>Matt. xxiv: 29-31.

<sup>24</sup>John xi: 25-26.

<sup>27</sup>John xii: 31-32.

<sup>22</sup>John vii: 38.

<sup>25</sup>John, xiv: 6.

out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."<sup>28</sup> "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world."<sup>29</sup> "And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."<sup>30</sup> "If God were your Father, ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."<sup>31</sup> "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."<sup>32</sup>

Most of the parables which he relates have, so he himself says, reference to his own person; as for example, the parable of "the good shepherd and his sheep." In reference to this, he says: "I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. By me if any men enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. . . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. . . . I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."<sup>33</sup>

These words seemed so utterly senseless even to the Jews of that time, that some of them said of him: "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?" Mad, forsooth! That for two thousand years, people have seen profound thought and divine wisdom in these ravings is the most astounding occurrence that has ever taken place.

In answer to Peter's question as to what reward his disciples would receive for having left everything dear to them, to follow him, Jesus said: "That ye which have fol-

<sup>28</sup>Matt. xiii: 41-42.

<sup>31</sup>John viii: 42.

<sup>29</sup>John viii: 23.

<sup>32</sup>John viii: 44.

<sup>30</sup>John viii: 29.

<sup>33</sup>John x: 7-17.



lowed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."<sup>34</sup>

Similar proofs of his delusions are to be found, over and over again, in the Gospels. Everything revolves solely and alone about his "Ego," and the delusions that center on this "Ego" know no limit. Neither time nor place affords limitations to this delusion. As he governs the world, and rules over the sun, moon and stars, so his origin lies in the infinite past and his life will be immortal and eternal.

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. . . . Before Abraham was, I am,"<sup>35</sup> "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."<sup>36</sup>

Christ's prayer for himself and his disciples is so characteristic that, in part, at least, we must quote it. It will hardly be necessary to call attention to the contradiction that is contained in the very fact that a God endowed with the highest power should "pray" at all:

"Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son, that thy son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."<sup>37</sup> In this manner this "prayer" continues until one might really say, that it furnishes proofs of his paranoia in every word.

His very relation to "God" as his "Father" is gradually obliterated in his delusions, and he begins to consider himself God.

"The Father is in me and I am in him"; I and the

<sup>34</sup>Matt. xix: 28-29.

<sup>35</sup>John viii: 56-58.

<sup>36</sup>Matt. xxviii: 18.

<sup>37</sup>John xvii: 1-5.

Father are one." "I and the Father," not perchance "the Father and I." "Whatever is mine is thine, and what is thine is mine."

Like a long drawn out crescendo in a Beethoven symphony, beginning with the faintest pianissimo and gradually expanding more and more, growing in intensity with every moment until it reaches, in a thundering fortissimo, its highest climax, so Jesus Christ's delusions of grandeur began slowly, developing step by step, until they finally assumed such dimensions that further intensification became impossible.

In quiet seclusion, as the son of a simple carpenter, we see the boy in the tender years of his youth engrossed in the holy scriptures of the Fathers, the study of which formed the seed, which, sown in the fertile soil of that peculiar mental condition, was soon to bear fruit. At the age of twelve he appears before the scribes in the temple and astonishes them by his peculiar interpretation of the Scriptures. Very soon afterwards he looks upon himself as one chosen to correct and instruct the people. Those passages in the writings of the Prophets, in which a Savior of the people, a rescuer from bondage and Roman subjugation, is mentioned, he ascribes to his own person and calls himself the "Savior of the people." Soon this "Savior" becomes a prince, a king. He is the "King of the Jews." He pretends to be descendant from King David. But soon the royal blood in his veins is transformed into divine blood, and he advances to the position of the "Son of God." "My Father in Heaven who sent me," henceforth he says. For the time being God still remains the "Almighty Father," who finds only an assistant in "his Son" and "sends" him to mankind. But soon this feeling of inferiority disappears too, and Father and Son become "one"; he becomes full partner in all governmental affairs of the world. But not yet is the climax reached, for God still has power equal to his. Only when all the powers of the Universe are concentrated solely in his person, self-exaltation can go no further, and so he actually says: "All power is given unto me in

heaven and on earth."<sup>38</sup> Neither time nor space can set bounds to his power and grandeur. He has been since all eternity and will be "until the end of the world." He is Lord and Ruler of heaven and earth, and everything that was, is, and will be, is subject to him. He is the Lord of the Universe.

No text book on mental diseases can give a more typical description of delusions of grandeur, gradually developing and infinitely increasing, than is offered by the life of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel gives ample proof that Jesus suffered not only from delusions, but also from hallucinations; that is, that he "saw" and "heard" the creations of his morbid imagination.

At the very beginning, when Jesus first appears on the scene to assume his role in the greatest and most tragic of all dramas, he is introduced to us under the spell of hallucinations of sight and hearing. "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him. And there came a voice from Heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."<sup>39</sup>

During the forty days in the wilderness he must have had hallucinations continually. His stay there can have been caused only by hallucinations. The very "spirit" that drove him there was the product of an hallucination. The frequent, constantly recurring utterances that he "saw" or "heard" this or that from the "Father," evidently refer to preceding hallucinations of sight and hearing. As examples passages like the following may serve: "And I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him."<sup>40</sup> "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."<sup>41</sup> "I speak that which I have seen with my Father . . . a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God."<sup>42</sup>

Likewise hallucinations form the basis of the story of the "transfiguration of Christ," according to which Jesus,

<sup>38</sup>Matt. xxviii: 18.

<sup>39</sup>Mark i: 10-11.

<sup>40</sup>John viii: 26.

<sup>41</sup>John viii: 28.

<sup>42</sup>John viii: 38-40.

with his three apostles, Peter, James, and John, went to the top of a high mountain, where Elias and Moses appeared to them, and where he again "heard a voice out of a cloud" saying: "This is my beloved Son. . . . hear ye him,"<sup>43</sup>

Closely related to the realms of hallucinations is a phenomenon called "illusions." Here we have not, as in hallucinations, a perception for which there is no external stimulant, but a diseased misinterpretation of an actually heard or seen occurrence. Paranoiacs, for example, frequently believe that they hear threats and denunciations in the voices that reach them from the homes of their neighbors. Not only actual human voices, but any noise, such as the clatter of a wagon, the twittering of birds and such like sounds, may be transformed in their diseased minds into the threats of an enemy.

A typical example of such an illusion is told of Jesus, when in answer to his request "Father, glorify thy name," a voice from heaven answered, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." At the same time it is expressly stated that the people that stood by said: "It thundered."<sup>44</sup> Obviously, a thunderstorm took place, which was misinterpreted by Jesus after the fashion of an illusion.

His diseased mental condition showed itself in almost everything he did. Already the selection of twelve men as his "apostles" is evidence of his delusions of grandeur. And what kind of men were these twelve apostles? Ignorant fishermen, individuals from the lowest strata of the people, men who had not the slightest trace of education or culture.

That men of this type as well as the great masses should be astonished by his "miracles," and acknowledge in him the Messiah, the Son of God—that, on the other hand, the educated part of the people, particularly the "scribes," the priests, and others in power considered his tirades blasphemous and saw in him a dangerous agitator of the people, is perfectly natural, and would probably be just the same today. But how naïve, how typically characteristic of his

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<sup>43</sup>Matt. xvii; Mark ix; Luke ix.

<sup>44</sup>John xii: 28, 29.

mental condition, is his own interpretation of these circumstances!

"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."<sup>45</sup>

Jesus hates the "wise and prudent" for not believing in him. And because he hates them, he "praises" the Father for "having hidden these things" from them. What a nonsensical chain of thoughts, which could have originated only in a paranoical brain!

To his disciples he says: "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you."<sup>46</sup> And this enemy of serpents and scorpions is the God of the Universe!

When Peter warns him that the "taxes" must be paid, he sends him to the sea to catch a fish. In the mouth of this fish would be found a "stater," which Peter was to pay as taxes for himself and Jesus.

When one of his disciples asked him whether a blind man whom he had cured was afflicted with blindness because of his own sins or those of his parents, he answered: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the man was blind so that he could show his power in him. How typical that is of paranoia!

When once, being hungry, he wanted to pick some fruit from a fig tree standing by the wayside, he saw that the tree bore leaves but no fruit, "for the time of figs was not yet." Thereupon Jesus cursed the fig tree, and said: "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever."<sup>48</sup> Does any one who curses a tree because it has no fruit wherewith to satisfy his hunger, look like a God or like a paranoiac?

How absurd and ridiculous must have been the spectacle when he, trying to impersonate a narrative of the prophet Zacharias,<sup>49</sup> made a solemn entrance, "as king," into Jerusa-

<sup>45</sup>Luke x: 21.

<sup>46</sup>Luke x: 19.

<sup>47</sup>John ix: 3.

<sup>48</sup>Mark x: 13; Matt. xxi: 19, 1.

<sup>49</sup>Zach. ix: 9.

lem, riding on an ass without bridle or saddle, and dressed in a shabby cloak. Surrounded by the rabble, accompanied by the shouts of the masses—"Long live the king," he rode proudly, like a conqueror of the world, into the capital of the kingdom. What should the people think of him? What would you think today of an ordinary workingman who rode on an ass into the capital of a country, surrounded by the mob, proclaiming himself a "king"? Unquestionably he would at once be locked up. There was no reason why he should not have been treated in the same way then. He would probably have been arrested then, but for fear of the rabble, a system of police, such as we have today, not existing in Jerusalem at that time.

We will now have to give a closer scrutiny to the so-called "miracles" which constitute the main factor in the enormous success which Jesus had with the masses, which, in fact, are so closely interwoven with him that it is hardly possible to think of Jesus without thinking of his "miracles."

Of all the wonderful things accomplished by Jesus, the healing of the sick and curing of infirmities are above all responsible for the halo of the supernatural and divine with which he was surrounded. As soon as his reputation for successfully healing the sick became known, people flocked to him from all parts of the country for relief, praying to be cured of their ailments. The greater his reputation grew, that is, the more people believed in his power, the more remarkable became his success. "They saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see."<sup>50</sup> In behalf of a correct judgment of these "wonderful cures," which astounded the masses more than anything else, we must digress from our subject for a moment and try, as briefly as possible, to describe the psychical mechanism and explain the laws of nature which are at the bottom of those "miraculous cures" that are believed in even today.

In the normal human brain every process, starting in the outer world and being perceived by the organs of sense, produces a corresponding conception. If I, for instance,

<sup>50</sup>Matt. xv: 31.

step to the window and the image of pouring rain is produced on my retina, the conception of "rain" arises in my brain. If my ears perceive the noise of rolling thunder, I thereby receive the conception of a thunder-storm that is taking place. Is my sense of smell aroused by the refreshing odor of flowers and blossoms, a conception relative to this arises in my brain. The same is true of the sense of touch. If any one pricks me with a needle, the pain caused by this produces the conception of pricking.

The process, which lies between the external stimulant and the completed conception, is, naturally, a most complicated one, the mechanism of which it will not be possible to discuss in detail here, such psychological analyses not being within the scope of our present task.

The only thing important to us, in the discussion before us, is the fact that the external stimulant forms the primary cause, and that the conception is the product of this outer stimulant. The pain of the prick of the needle produces in our brain the conception of pricking.

Under certain abnormal conditions this process, as it is related here, can be completely reversed. That is, the chain of the various psychological factors completes itself in an inverted order of occurrence. What, under normal conditions, is the result becomes the cause, and vice versa. Instead of the external stimulant producing the conception, the latter, that is, the mere idea, produces a sensation which assumes the character of reality.

Just as every other psychopathic symptom has its analogy in the realm of the normal, so we find the foregoing process, in its mildest form, in the average normal person. It has certainly happened to many people that in mentioning vermin, they felt an "itching of the entire body," or that the description or sight of an operation on the eye caused an acute pain in their own eyes. Here, then, we have a peripheral sensation produced by a conception—therefore, an inverted process of the normal.

This inversion of a normal psychical process is called suggestion. Consequently, by suggestion we understand the production of sensations or perceptions in the domain

of any of the senses, by *conceptions*, instead—as in the normal human being—by peripheral stimulants. If this process of inversion goes so far that one can suggest everything—visible and audible—to an individual; if, for instance, the voice of a person is actually heard by someone, because I have produced the conception of this voice in him by saying: “Listen! So and so is speaking to you,” the borderline of normality has been passed, and we have a symptom of disease.

The psychical condition which must exist in a person to make this inversion of a normal process possible, is called suggestibility. It must be evident, without further discussion, that the greater the suggestibility of an individual, the further he is removed from a normal mentality. We may, therefore, safely say: The degree of suggestibility stands in reverse ratio to the mental soundness of the individual.

Just as it is possible to suggest the sensation of physical pain—let us say, for example, burning with a red hot iron—to a suggestible person, while there is no corresponding stimulant, so we can arouse a negative conception and thereby prevent an actually existing stimulant from producing a corresponding sensation. For example, we can suggest: “You have no sensation in your left hand, it is entirely numb.” Deep pricks of a needle are now no longer perceived—that is, if the suggestibility is of sufficient intensity.

The conceptions that form the starting point of such processes of suggestion can, as in the aforementioned cases, originate either from outer conditions, that is, by the assurances of other persons, or they can come into being by the agency of the individual himself, in which latter case we speak of auto-suggestion.

There is a large group of symptoms of disease which originated in this manner, that is, through the person's own morbid ideas, or through auto-suggestion. To this belong all sorts of hysterical symptoms, such as paralysis, disturbances in sensation, blindness, deafness, mutism and many other conditions, produced by hysteria. In these cases



the symptoms were not produced through actual changes in the corresponding part of the body, but we have to deal with phenomena, depending merely on ideas, for which no actual peripheral cause exists.

To "heal" such cases, we must remove the morbid idea which produced the symptoms. The treatment, consequently, must be psychical. How to go to work, depends as much on the individuality of the physician as on that of the patient. To produce a conception or an idea in the mind of a patient, or what amounts to the same thing, to remove one, it is, above all things, necessary to gain his complete confidence; he must believe in the treatment that is to cure him. An unusually strong influence must be exercised on the mental process of the patient, in many cases it needs only something unusual, something different from the ordinary, or something mystical to produce the desired effect.

To this is due the fact, that is as old as the traditions of the human race and that takes place before our own eyes even today, that in many such cases of disease the most absurd methods of treatment meet with the most wonderful success. The more mystical, the more obscure the treatment, the more surprising is frequently the result.

What form of suggestion was used as a treatment for disease in different periods of history and by different nations, it is naturally impossible to state here. There were thousands of forms, which by their miraculous cures again and again astounded the masses as something new, but which were all based on the same principle. The manifold sacrifices on the altars of ancient nations, the innumerable "Heathen" rites for healing the sick, the "touchings" and "conferences" practiced by superstitious peoples of the Middle Ages, the thousands of quacks who try to create a sensation by some new, startling remedy, all these are treatments the miraculous successes of which are based on this phenomenon—suggestion. We always meet the same bugbear, clothed in a new garment. For that is the main, important thing—the garment always must be changed. As soon as the old nonsense is worn out, the people must be befooled by some new humbug. Not long ago, magnetism,

spiritualism, and then hypnotism, one after the other, performed this kind of miracles.

At present, in America, a new "fad" has taken the place of the worn-out isms, a fad the miraculous cures of which are said to surpass anything else that has ever taken place, in this line. The new garment, or form, in which suggestion this time celebrates its triumph, calls itself "Christian Science." This new hocus-pocus owes its origin to a woman, who, for financial reasons, was officially declared insane by her own children. The absurdities of this "Christian Science" overstep all bounds. According to it, there is no such thing as disease. All the troubles which life may offer can be alleviated by faith. There is no pain for him who believes. Even death dares not approach him who believes. A young girl whom one would not venture to call unintelligent, said, in all seriousness, that a virgin could readily give birth to a child without having had sexual intercourse with a man, if only she be pure enough and sufficiently strong in faith. She was advised to be careful in such matters, as others might be skeptical of such virginal conceptions.

And this nonsense, which one would think every educated person would recognize as such, has spread throughout America like an epidemic. In the City of New York there is not one temple, but a number of marble palaces which have cost millions of dollars, in which the followers of "Christian Science" gather to hold divine service.

The most remarkable thing about this is that in this instance it is not the masses who seem to have lost their reason, but the so-called "educated classes," who speak of nothing but the wonders of "Christian Science." Most astonishing of all is the fact that the Jews are the most ardent disciples of this new cult; in shoals they stream into the church of the "Scientists," or let the "healers" come to them to pray away their sufferings—of course for their good money. Those who, for some reason, are unable to come in direct contact with the "healers" can be cured by "absent treatment," which is even less expensive, and is said to show equally good results.

Moreover, it is not only the before-described cases of hysteria which are "cured" by "Christian Science," for inasmuch as there is no such thing as disease, all believers must necessarily get well, no matter what ails them. Therefore, it is an actual fact that a great many persons afflicted with organic disease, persons suffering from some kind of paralysis or any other physical infirmity, produce within themselves the idea of absolute health. Such people play the part, as one might say, as sufferers from "imaginary health." A short time ago a lady came to see me, who had been under treatment for some nervous disorder, and who, in addition to this, was almost totally deaf. It was necessary to shout at the top of one's voice to make her hear what was said. She came to me, beaming with joy, to tell me that "Christian Science" had restored her hearing—she could now "hear a pin drop." As a fact, she did not hear a bit better than before—she had a sclerosis of the middle ear—one had to shout as loud as ever, but she insisted that her sense of hearing had become entirely normal—she suffered from "imaginary health."

A man, totally blind for years from a double atrophy of the optic nerve, not even able to distinguish light from darkness, claimed that after a few "Christian Science" treatments he was able to see perfectly well. He described exactly what he "saw" in the room, things, some of which were, and some of which were not, there.

If we see such cases today, in the twentieth century, can you wonder that Jesus, in his time, could show similar results?

Jesus' wonderful cures, which form the main part of his "miracles," actually present nothing wonderful in themselves. They are the same "wonder-cures" which are to be found in all periods of history, always in a different form. Whether Jesus' words: "Get up and walk," whether the sight of the pillar of smoke of a Greek sacrificial altar, whether the wonderful effect of any holy fountain, the pilgrimage to the "holy cloak in Trier," hypnotic treatments, Christian Science or any other method of suggestion, accomplished the so-called cures, is absolutely immaterial.

The one is not more miraculous than the other—we are always dealing with the same phenomenon, with suggestion.

Jesus was, naturally, himself absolutely convinced that his cure of diseases and infirmities was the result of the divine power which he possessed. The blind and lame, as well as the diseased, existed only "for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."<sup>51</sup> It is almost pathetic how he smeared saliva and earth into the eyes of a blind man, believing that thereby he had cured him.

There can be no doubt that already at that time there were a great many hysterical people among the Jews. Many of the cases described in the Gospel are absolutely characteristic of this affection. The many cases of combined mutism and blindness can be explained in no other way.

Phenomena which played a great role in the Gospel were the "devils" and "evil spirits," the "driving out" of which so greatly occupied Jesus. Authors of all nations describe such "demons," who forced their way into the bodies of people to plague and torment them.

Josephus describes the views of his contemporaries on this subject by saying that the souls of the dead who were guilty of particularly grave sins or crimes were doomed to force their way into the bodies of the living, to torment them and to drive them to evil deeds. Different kinds of demons were distinguished by their sins and character.

Obviously, those possessed by evil spirits or devils were epileptics or hystero-epileptics, who, during an attack, uttered inarticulate sounds, and sometimes cried out obscene words or curses.

But Jesus, far from recognizing these conditions as manifestations of a disease, was quite in accord with his time, and was encompassed by the same superstition as his contemporaries. He, too, believed that epileptics were possessed by devils, which he was called upon to expel. He even differentiated between several kinds of devils, whose expulsion must be undertaken in different ways. So he says of a devil which he has just expelled: "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup>John ix: 1-3; John xi: 4.      <sup>52</sup>Matt. xvii: 21.

That Jesus shared the superstition of his time and believed in the existence of demons and devils, is perfectly natural and does not seem at all remarkable to us. But how will they who still today accept Jesus as the "Son of God," who believe that he is older than the world, and that he is "one" with the "Father," how will they explain that this "God" believes people, suffering from an ordinary nervous disease, to be "possessed," whose devils he must in a particular manner expel? Is it possible for anyone to give a rational answer to this question?

To attempt to explain the remaining so-called "miracles" of Christ, would have as little purpose as interest. What matters it what process lies at the bottom of the story that Jesus "walked on the water"? To convince anyone who firmly "believes" in all these stories is, at best, a hopeless task, and for the rational observer they are of no actual interest.

What can it matter to us what deception formed the foundation of the change of water into wine at the wedding in Cana? Is not the whole occurrence ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not a point-blank blasphemy to the religious believer that the "God of mankind" should have performed such sleight-of-hand tricks at the wedding of some Jewish couple?

The explanation of many of the "miracles" is so evident, that it is a "miracle" that they have been regarded as such for two thousand years. There is, for example, the feeding of four thousand men, women, and children with "seven loaves and fishes," after which "they took up of the broken meat that was left in seven baskets."<sup>53</sup>

According to the various descriptions the masses of the Jewish people were in many respects similar, at that time, to the million Russian Jews, with which the city of New York is blessed today. The same peculiarities which we find described in the Bible can be observed in them, here, today. And why should not the many characteristics of a

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<sup>53</sup>Matt. xv: 32-39; Mark viii: 6-8.

people which has always dwelt apart from the rest of the world have perpetuated themselves?

One of their peculiarities is their habit of carrying with them all sorts of eatables. Wherever one meets these people, they take something to eat out of their pockets. They sit in street cars munching oranges, bananas, and other such delicacies. The children, in particular, must continually have something stuffed into their mouths. Babies are nursed by their mothers anywhere—in the street-cars, or on the street—and the older children have their hands and mouths filled with something to eat. And the remnants of these eatables? It is only necessary to take a walk through the otherwise delightful Central Park on a Saturday afternoon. The paths and lawns are strewn with orange and apple parings, with greasy pieces of torn paper and with every imaginable remnant of food. Not only “seven” but “seventy times seven” baskets could easily be filled with these remnants. It has happened more than once, that I have sent people away from my clinic because they had the impudence to come to consult me with their mouths full of food, the children having both hands and mouth occupied with something to eat.

And we are asked to believe that these people left their houses for three days without making provision for their own and their children’s sustenance? We are asked to believe that for three days they listened to the sermons of Jesus, without bothering themselves about their bodily needs? How naïve! Hardly any nation would have evinced such enthusiasm, least of all, the Jews.

Anyone familiar with the Jewish rabble, and who pictures to himself the situation as it existed at that time, must see how, one after the other, the people drew articles of food from their pockets, how the mothers stuffed all sorts of tid-bits into the mouths of their children, and how, finally, the whole plain was covered with remnants of all kinds of eatables.

That the paranoiac Jesus then believed that he had fed about ten thousand people with seven loaves of bread and that the heaps of remnants were left over from the seven

loaves is again as characteristic of his mental condition as anything could possibly be. And his companions? Is anyone astonished that these ignorant proletarians believed any nonsense of their "Master"?

The miracle of miracles is the birth of Jesus Christ, whose mother, made of flesh and blood, was an ordinary human being, but whose father was the "only, eternal God," who up to that time had ruled the world solely and alone, without wife and child, without father and mother, without beginning and without end.

About the relationship of these two parents to each other, the "only, eternal God" and the "virgin Mary," the entire learned—with all due respect—world has cudged its brains for the last two thousand years. The "miraculous conception" has been made the subject of so many "learned" treatises that the entire surface of the Jordan River could have been covered by them. What wisdom has been spent on this subject! Dear God in Heaven! A virgin with a son—without a physical father! And this "Virgin," an altogether ordinary Jewish woman, has been worshiped for two thousand years by prostrate mankind as the "Mother of God," the "Queen of Heaven," the "Holy Virgin"! Innumerable churches have been erected in her honor!

On the other hand, there has been no paucity of cynics who have not hesitated to call Jesus an illegitimate child, whose fatherly "Holy Ghost," they contend, was some Roman soldier. According to our view, this is an injustice to "Mother Mary." From our viewpoint, we have no reason to doubt the chastity of this lady. To anyone who has followed the foregoing discourses with sufficient intelligence, and is open to conviction on the subject of Jesus' paranoia, a rational explanation of the "miraculous conception" can offer no great difficulties.

According to the Gospel, the birth of Christ was accompanied by a whole series of mystical events. The angel Gabriel appeared to the mother, to notify her that she would be made pregnant by the "Holy Ghost." Gabriel had evidently had some practice in such notifications, inasmuch as he had shortly before notified Zacharias, the father

of John, of a similar occurrence. Joseph, Mary's husband, received instructions at the same time from the angel. Immediately after the birth of Christ, the angel informed a band of shepherds that the Savior had been born. Then the "wise men from the East" came to Jerusalem to greet the new-born "king of the Jews." They had "seen his star in the East" and the star "went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was."<sup>54</sup> Before this, the wise men had gone to Herod and told him of the newly born king. Herod gathered together all the high-priests and scribes among the people to find out from them where Christ was born. Later on, prompted by jealousy of "the new-born king," he caused all the children in Bethlehem to be killed. But Joseph, at the command of the angel, had taken his wife and child to Egypt, to save the child.

What a chain of "miracles," the last one always more miraculous than the one before! And truly! no small test of faith! Immaculate Conception! A star, announcing the birth of a King of the Jews, which led the wise men of the East to the house of Joseph! To say nothing of the busy angel Gabriel! But what matters it? If one "believes" at all without thinking, a little more or less surely makes no difference.

But let anyone who is disposed to think, weigh carefully the following, most important fact. Here we have the birth of Christ, accompanied by the most unheard-of wonders. The report of the birth of the "King of the Jews" penetrates to the most distant countries. Because of it, Herod gathers together the high-priests and scribes from all over the country. And then? What follows? Thirty years, a third of a century, during which the "King of the Jews" works in his father's carpenter shop, during which no one hears or sees anything of him, during which no one takes the slightest notice of his existence. Is not the absurdity of this miracle clear on the very face of it? The very shepherds were notified of his birth by the angel Gabriel, so that they could hardly hasten fast enough to the

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<sup>54</sup>Matt. ii: 1-9.



young "King of the Jews," and then—thirty years of absolutely nothing!

To satisfactorily explain this palpable contradiction might well be difficult. Of course, it could be said at this point that the Evangelists have suppressed much and reported only the most important occurrences. On the other hand, it is perfectly clear that if at the birth of Christ things occurred which occasioned these tales of wonders, during the thirty years following things of the utmost importance must also have taken place. The long obscurity of Jesus, after the wonder-scenes at his birth, can not possibly be rationally explained.

On the other hand, not only is this fact perfectly reconcilable with the theory which we have given of Jesus, but it fits exactly into the frame of our description and is another proof of the correctness of our deductions. The explanations of these "miracles" which follow are not based on a simple surmise, but represent a logical conclusion drawn from conditions and circumstances as they offered themselves to us. It is not merely a surmise, if one shows how certain persons would act under certain circumstances. Quite the contrary. If the psychical mechanism of a person is known to us, and we are, at the same time, acquainted with the accompanying circumstances, we must be able to predict his actions in advance, just as an astronomer predicts an eclipse of the sun.

Let us recall to mind the development of Jesus' paranoia, as above described. We have a youth with unusual intellectual qualifications, who, however, is predisposed to mental disturbances, and in whom delusions gradually develop. He spends all his leisure time in studying the "Holy Scriptures," which unquestionably add to his mental disorder. At the age of thirty he appears in public, a fully developed paranoiac. His father—not the Holy Ghost, but the carpenter, Joseph—had died a year before. Until then nothing particular had been heard of Jesus. Those with whom he had come in contact knew him as a son of the carpenter's family. This is expressly emphasized in the Gospel. For when he spoke of his divine origin, the people said: "Is

not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, 'I came down from Heaven?'<sup>55</sup> From this it is indisputable that at the time of his birth no occurrences which were "miraculous" could have taken place, for if the report of the birth of the Messiah had penetrated to the land of the East, and if, because of this, Herod had assembled all the high-priests and scribes of the whole country, his friends, too, would most certainly have heard something about them.

On the other hand, we may safely assert that between him and his disciples, the fisher lads, a conversation like the following took place, not once, but often: Jesus speaks unceasingly of his "Father in Heaven" who "sent" him, who took particular pleasure in him, and whose only son he was. Of course, the apostles, headed by Peter, asked him why he called himself the Son of God, in that he was the son of Joseph and Mary. That they actually put this question to him and discussed this subject frequently in detail with him, does not permit the slightest doubt. Can we even imagine the possibility of this question not arising? And how did Jesus answer?

Anyone with any experience in mental diseases must have seen a great number of young paranoiacs, suffering from delusions of grandeur. How often such persons are heard saying: "I am not the child of my parents. I am an adopted child; my real father was a count, prince, king—according to the delusion! I am destined to perform great deeds in the world. I am a direct descendant of this or that king. Some day I will sit on the throne and rule over nations." If the patient is asked what induced these people to call themselves his parents, he will relate a long story—why for this or that reason he was stolen from his real parents—how those people adopted him for the purpose of, later on, sharing his fame and a lot of other things of a like character. Jesus was exactly such a case. To the question whether he were not the son of Joseph and Mary, he evidently answered, that God, the Lord, not Joseph, was

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<sup>55</sup>John vi: 42.

his father, and that the "Virgin" Mary had borne him, as it had been prophesied by the prophet Isaiah.

An essential peculiarity of paranoiacs is the fact that they interpret everything they see, hear, or read as applying to themselves. An article in the newspaper, a story, a book which accidentally falls into their hands, is aimed at them, they "are meant thereby," etc. In precisely such a paranoical manner Jesus referred all the prophecies of the Prophets to his own person. He was meant by the king who was to reign over the world. He was the Savior of the people whom all the Prophets foretold. He was the child, of whom Isaiah said: "See, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."<sup>66</sup>

It is, therefore, unquestionably Jesus himself who in his discussions with his disciples was the originator of the legend of the mystical occurrences that are supposed to have accompanied his birth. In later years, he, no doubt, heard of the comet which was observed at the time of his birth, and like everything else, this, too, he referred to his own person, and produced in his disordered brain the story of the "wise men of the East," conducted by a "star" to the place where he was born. To the same condition the story of the slaughter of the innocents at Bethlehem obviously owes its origin.

In view of the importance of this subject we want to emphasize once more the fact that it is not a mere surmise on our part, that leads us to see in Jesus the originator of the mystical occurrences that accompanied his birth. No, it is not possible to think otherwise than that the legend concerning his birth, that is, the "miraculous conception," as well as the other occurrences, were constructed by him after he became obsessed by the delusion of grandeur that he was the "Son of God."

One of those patent contradictions altogether characteristic of his paranoia, shows itself in his "paternal genealogical tree." In spite of the fact that God is his father, and not the carpenter Joseph, with whom he therefore denies all relationship, he still traces his genealogical tree back to

<sup>66</sup>Isa. vii: 7.

King David through this same Joseph—to prove his descent from this king. Indeed, the genealogical tree is traced back even to Abraham with remarkable architectural symmetry. “So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.”<sup>57</sup> That is, up to Joseph it is thirteen generations and Jesus is the fourteenth. But where does the “miraculous conception” come in, if Jesus, in this manner, traces his origin back to King David? How does the genealogical tree of Joseph concern us, if he is not the father of Jesus? The honest carpenter surely never dreamed that he would be made a direct descendant of King David and Father Abraham! But in paranoia everything goes! And if one once begins to “believe,” there is no telling how far one may be led!

To anyone not forcibly opposed to admitting the truth, there can no longer be a doubt that Jesus was a paranoiac. He presents as typical a case of this disease as can be imagined. All the symptoms are fully represented, and the development as well as the course of this case corresponds in every respect to the well-known description which modern psychiatry, based on many years’ clinical experience, has given of this peculiar psychical affection.

The purpose of the foregoing exposition is not by any means to destroy certain ideals; it is solely and alone a presentation of the truth which has been attempted here. The many mystical occurrences with which we are here concerned, and which have become of such immense importance to the world, can in no other way be satisfactorily explained, and it is, therefore, this scientific explanation, this clearing up of the most important historical events, which forms the only purpose of these dissertations.

## 2.—THE RELATIONS BETWEEN JESUS CHRIST AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

We must in no way permit the conclusion at which we

<sup>57</sup>Matt. i: 17.

arrived in the preceding chapter to influence our judgment about the historical events which developed from the insanity of Christ. The mere fact that a person is insane, would by no means justify us in condemning his actions or the conditions resulting from them.

A person may be a paranoiac and still perform great deeds, and we will, therefore, have to judge the acts and works of Jesus Christ quite objectively. Even the fact that certain actions are the direct result of paranoical delusions, must not influence us in judging them. The pearl is the product of a pathological process in the oyster, is it therefore less beautiful? We are far from sharing the absurd view that a genius must be insane, but a person can be a genius in spite of a simultaneous mental disease. Jean Jacques Rousseau was a paranoiac. He was a genius, not because he had this disease, but in spite of it. Just so, there are painters and musicians who accomplish great things, in spite of their mental abnormalities.

By means of Jesus' insanity we have traced to their foundations phenomena which, until now, have remained unexplained. Now, we will have to examine in a strictly objective manner the character of the doctrines which Christ gave to the people. As in judging all his other mental faculties, we shall here, too, follow strictly the reports of the Evangelists. For it is not the manifold doctrines that have arisen during the course of centuries and have sailed under the flag of "Christianity" which are of paramount interest to us. In our psychological and historical studies, we must confine ourselves to the direct utterances of Christ, the only transmitters of which are the Evangelists.

As a rule, one associates the person of Christ with the highest love of mankind, the greatest self-sacrifice for the benefit of others, unselfishness in its greatest potency. The reason for this lies, first of all, in the idea conceived by Jesus himself, that he took upon himself the sins of the world, giving his life, as a sacrifice, for all mankind and, secondly, in his doctrine of brotherly love, which extends even to one's enemies, and should have no limits. As far as the first point is concerned, it probably needs no assur-

ance that Christ did not die willingly, nor that he could not take upon himself the sins of the world. This idea is based on one of his many paranoïcal delusions, which we will not again discuss here. But what of the doctrine of brotherly love, of which Christianity is so proud?

Every doctrine that is directed to the benefit of mankind, which subordinates personal interest to the general good, and which makes the purpose of life striving and working for others, must have the approval of every educated person. It is the essence and incentive of every intelligent community, of true civilization. If the doctrine of Christ had furthered this principle, the world would owe him eternal gratitude, no matter whether he was a paranoiac or not.

A certain principle of altruism was honored as ideal by all the civilized nations of ancient times. The duties, the allegiance which the Greeks owed their country, were of greater importance to them than all personal interests. "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*,"<sup>58</sup> says the poet, when describing the emotions of the people. The chief law of the Jews, too, is: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."<sup>59</sup>

What, then, has Jesus done to further this principle? In his Sermon on the Mount<sup>60</sup> he does say a good deal about brotherly love, but his eccentricity makes the matter almost ridiculous. That one should be just to one's enemies and treat them humanely, is certainly a praiseworthy admonition. Thus we find among the Jewish laws: "Thou shalt not avenge."<sup>61</sup> But if one goes to such an extreme as to teach the people that if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, to offer him also the left, one not only makes an important doctrine ridiculous, but becomes the author of despicable principles. To give to a thief who has stolen your coat "the mantle too," is absurd. "To teach the people that anyone who says to his brother "Thou fool!" deserves the fires of "hell," is purest nonsense.

Nevertheless, we would overlook these boundless exag-

<sup>58</sup>Horatius Ode. iii: 2-13.

<sup>59</sup>Lev. xix: 18.

<sup>60</sup>Lev. xix: 18.

<sup>61</sup>Lev. xix: 18.

generations and eccentricities, if his doctrine contained anything of actual benefit to mankind. It might be possible that, in spite of his paranoia, Jesus taught new ethical principles or useful social arrangements and improvements. But—where are such doctrines, where are his ethics? What does he tell the people that they should do?

In all his speeches and doctrines we find this one admonition: "You must worship me, for I am your God!" Everything else is a matter of complete indifference to him. How the people live, what they think and do, whether they work or not, all this matters not, they must only "believe" in him. Why, he even goes so far as to directly forbid honest labor and care for the future, the most necessary, fundamental principle of every civilized community! "Take no thought for your life, for what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. . . . Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. . . . Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek)."<sup>62</sup> What a pernicious doctrine! What kind of a community would it be, where such principles were carried out? A retrogression to the prehistoric condition of man! A negation of all civilization!

Again and again he assures the people that all that is necessary "to be saved" is faith in him. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."<sup>63</sup>

While, as we have seen, the highest state of blessedness could be attained by absolute belief in him, no matter how evil a life in other respects was pursued by a person, the "unbeliever" is punished by "eternal damnation," even though he has led a blameless and exemplary life. "Whoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven."

<sup>62</sup>Matt. vi: 25-32; Luke xii: 22-30.

<sup>63</sup>Mark xvi: 16,

"And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea."<sup>65</sup>

This is very noble, indeed! Very "Christian"! Where in all this are the beautiful doctrines of brotherly love, and love for one's enemies? How does this agree with the command that if you are struck by some one on the right cheek, you should offer him the left? Oh! It is easy enough to preach, but how about his own actions? Jesus says of the Pharisees: "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not."<sup>66</sup> Exactly the same can be said of him. No one could be more intolerant towards his opponents than he. Not only his "enemies," but everyone who does not believe in all his eccentricities, should be punished by "eternal damnation," and, with a millstone about his neck, be thrown into the sea.

All those cities in which he was not acclaimed and honored as "king" and "Messiah" he curses, neck and crop. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. . . . It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."<sup>67</sup>

In vain do we seek here for the "Christian love" which strives only for the good and happiness of the enemy. Or, are his doctrines applicable to all others and not to him?

As, on the one hand, he curses everyone and condemns to eternal damnation in hell whoever does not believe in him, so on the other hand, he promises "paradise" and "eternal life in the kingdom of Heaven" to everyone who "believes" in him, even if this belief is declared in the last moments of the life of a criminal. Thus, he promised one of the murderers who were crucified with him that "Today

<sup>65</sup>Mark ix: 42

<sup>66</sup>Matt. xxiii: 3.

<sup>67</sup>Matt. xi: 21-24.



shalt thou be with me, in Paradise," merely because the murderer begged him to think of him when he came into his "kingdom."<sup>68</sup>

His entire code of ethics consists of blind faith. Who-soever "believes" blindly and prays devoutly can accomplish anything. Neither cleverness nor industry is of any use to man; "faith," solely and alone, can demand and perform everything. "If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."<sup>69</sup>

Is this not the most pernicious doctrine that can be imagined? Does it not mean the forcible stupefying of the people, and keeping them from honest and profitable work? In fact, Jesus repeatedly says that only the stupid ones, the "poor in spirit," the "minors," can be saved, while the "wise" and "prudent" are denied this blessing. What a ridiculous and pernicious doctrine!

When he sends his apostles to the different cities to make propaganda for him, he tells them: "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the crassest opposite of what sense and reason dictate! They are not to consider what they will say, but shall leave this to the Holy Ghost! Idiots would act exactly like this.

Blind faith in him is man's only virtue. Nothing in the world is sacred, nothing is worth loving, except solely and alone, He. Why, even the love and respect due parents, held sacred by all nations, must vanish before the love for—Him. The most important law of the Old Testament, "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother," is now robbed of its significance. For Jesus says: "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of

<sup>68</sup>Luke xxiii: 42-43.

<sup>69</sup>Matt. xxi: 21, 22.

<sup>70</sup>Matt. x: 19.

me."<sup>71</sup> On another occasion he goes so far as to say: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he can not be my disciple."<sup>72</sup> In view of such utterances, the diagnosis of a mental disease is charitable. For it would be degrading to mankind to think that a mentally normal human being could give expression to such vileness. And this is the God of mankind!

When Jesus, with his disciples, wanted to cross the sea, and one of these begged to be allowed first to bury his father, he answered him brutally: "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead."<sup>73</sup>

Besides, his conduct towards his own mother was just as inconsiderate and haughty. When once he was told, "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee," . . . he answered: "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" and he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples and said, 'Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'<sup>74</sup> Here, as before, mental disease can be the only excuse.

On another occasion he turns his mother down with the words: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"<sup>75</sup> Truly, an amiable son! That the other members of his own family considered him insane, is said quite plainly, for they openly declare, "He is beside himself."<sup>76</sup>

The arrogance and regardlessness with which he, the simple carpenter's son, treated everyone who did not belong to the masses that acclaimed and praised him, knew no limits.

Human nature, in its main traits, is the same, the whole world over. The lights and shadows of mankind manifested themselves in an analogous manner in every period of history, and among all nations. In the few men, who at

<sup>71</sup>Matt. x: 37.

<sup>72</sup>Luke xiv: 26.

<sup>73</sup>Matt. viii: 21, 22.

<sup>74</sup>Matt. xii: 47-50; Mark iii: 32-35.

<sup>75</sup>John ii: 4.

<sup>76</sup>Mark iii: 21.

any time succeeded in rising, by their own efforts, to the position of rulers and leaders of their fellow-men, we find everywhere, the same pre-eminences, but also the same weaknesses. On the one side cleverness, foresight, the ability to command and direct, and on the other vanity, envy, and ambition—these are the qualities we meet everywhere, among the wild tribes of Asia as well as among the highly civilized Greeks and Romans.

The leaders and rulers among the Jews at the time of Christ were, certainly, not better nor worse than the corresponding leaders of other nations and during other periods of history.

But Jesus, the humble son of a carpenter, who, until then, had accomplished nothing, who for thirty years had lived in the seclusion of his father's workroom, appeared suddenly before the rulers and leaders of the people and berated them as though they were a horde of the lowest and commonest vagabonds. Indeed, the expressions which he used are such as one rarely, if ever, hears among decent and well-bred people. He not only incessantly calls them "dissemblers, hypocrites, fools, blind men, thieves, robbers" and other names of the same character, but bestows on them the title of "serpents, generation of vipers," and also asks them, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?"<sup>77</sup> And what had these people done to him, to make him treat them with such "Christian love"? Nothing. Already at their first meeting, when they came to see John perform his baptism, he called them a generation of vipers.<sup>78</sup>

Anyone who did not believe absolutely in him was berated in the most unspeakable terms. "The publicans" [this was the most despised calling among the Jews] "and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you,"<sup>79</sup> he says to the "high-priests" and dignitaries of the people, without the slightest provocation.

How does this endless abuse—and that for no real cause—agree with his incessant preaching of "brotherly love"? as, for instance, that anybody who says to his brother "Thou fool," should be condemned to "the fires of hell"?

<sup>77</sup>Matt. xxiii: 33.

<sup>78</sup>Matt. iii: 7.

<sup>79</sup>Matt. xxi: 31.

Like all other paranoiacs, he harbors intense hatred towards anyone who does not agree with him in everything, and humor him in his delusions. This is the only way in which his unseemly and indecent conduct towards the authorities of the people, as well as towards his own mother and brother, can be explained.

In consequence of his mental condition, his hatred extends towards the entire class of the educated and wealthy, and he feels himself in sympathy only with the ignorant rabble. The paranoical conceptions resulting from these feelings are expressed in the before-mentioned words: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."<sup>80</sup>

The conspicuous contradiction to be found in this, that on the one hand, "the Father and Lord of heaven and earth" "hid these things" from the "wise and prudent," and that, on the other, these same "wise and prudent" ones, because the Father and Lord had hidden this from them, were called "thieves, robbers, serpents and vipers" and were told that "harlots" would enter the kingdom of heaven before them—this direct contradiction never occurred to the paranoiac; for such contradictions are essentially characteristic of this mental disorder.

His hatred towards the wealthy class led, so far as his doctrines are concerned, to the greatest absurdities. He did not, like Communists or Social-Democrats, teach the equal distribution of labor and capital, or the abolition of personal property and the establishment of a general community of goods—no, he had not even the slightest notion of a social system of any kind. Most naïvely, just like a child, he preached to the people that all the wealthy would go to perdition, all the poor to heaven, irrespective of any other qualifications they might have. Thus he tells them the story of the rich man who clothed himself in purple and fine linen and lived in splendid luxury, and of Lazarus, who lived on the bread-crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. When both men died, the rich man went to hell,

<sup>80</sup>Matt. xi: 25; Luke x: 21.

where he suffered the most excruciating tortures, while the poor man was carried to the lap of Abraham to enjoy eternal blessedness. The rich man, according to this, was guilty of no other crime than that of being rich, and the poor man's only merit was his poverty. But Abraham said to the rich man: "Remember that thou has received thy benefits and blessings during thy lifetime, while Lazarus, on the contrary, received only what was bad. Now he will be comforted and thou wilt be punished."

What a demoralizing, pernicious doctrine! As if created for the sole purpose of encouraging the proletariat in idleness and laziness!

In spite of all his inconsistent speeches, there were some among the well-to-do who believed in him, being influenced by his "miracles" and attributing his inconsistencies to their own lack of understanding.

Thus a "certain ruler," who had evidently heard a great deal about his doctrine of "eternal life," came to him and asked naïvely: "Good master, what must one do to be saved?" And Jesus answered: "Sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven; and follow me." Just imagine a community in which everyone acts according to this principle! On what did all those who "followed" him expect to live? On the wealthy, who were to share with them. But if all the wealthy were to go to hell, there would be no wealthy class, and then? When the "ruler" did not follow the advice to give away everything he had, Jesus gave vent to the famous utterance: "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."<sup>81</sup>

What is so pernicious and absurd in his doctrine is the fact that he made all sorts of promises to the poor, merely because they were poor, and condemned the wealthy for no other reason but that they were wealthy.

"Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh." Of

<sup>81</sup>Luke xviii: 25.

course this is followed by: "Woe unto you that are rich!" "woe unto you that are full!" "woe unto you that laugh!" for you shall hunger, weep, etc.<sup>82</sup>

Had he comforted those of the poor who suffered injustice, or had he said to the wealthy that if they do wrong they will be punished, in spite of their wealth, the matter would at least have had a moral purpose; but to send the rich to hell because they were rich and to promise the kingdom of God to the poor merely because they were poor, was as senseless as it was demoralizing.

As is to be expected of a person in his mental condition, he continually contradicts his own doctrines. After preaching again and again that only the poor can enter the kingdom of God, while the rich will go to hell, he tells them the following parable: A gentleman who wanted to travel, made over his fortune to his servants. To the first servant he gave five talents, to the second, he gave two, and to the third, one. The first one traded with his five talents and won five more, the second also won two more, but the third hid the money, his master had given him, in a hole he had dug in the ground. Now, when the master returned and received from the first two of his servants double the amount of money he had given them, he praised them cordially and made them great promises. But when the third servant returned to him the one original talent, given him by his master, he was soundly berated for being a wicked and slothful servant, his master saying to him: "Thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."<sup>83</sup>

One is almost compelled to doubt the evidence of one's own eyes! Is this "Christian love?" It almost gives the

<sup>82</sup>Luke vi: 20-25.

<sup>83</sup>Matt. xxv: 14-30.

impression that Jesus is ridiculing his own doctrine! So, we are to be Shylocks, demanding one hundred per cent. interest on our money.

No indeed, we do him an injustice—that is, Shylock—for *he* certainly did not carry usury to such a height. And this usury is rewarded by taking away the mite from him who has nothing and giving it to him who has an abundance—and the poor man is thrust into outer darkness where there shall be “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

In the thousands of commentaries that have been written on the Gospel, this parable, too, received its interpretation. But what sense is there in injecting all sorts of meanings, interpreting everything according to one's taste and thereby setting things topsy-turvy? Anyone who can “explain” these absurd contradictions and can find any sense in such expressions, can prove that white is black, and black white. We cannot enter into such discussions here. Any one who is open to conviction, must see that the only correct “interpretation” lies in the diagnosis of insanity.

His speeches are full of such contradictions, all of which to mention here we have neither time nor space. We will therefore confine ourselves to a few examples.

On another occasion, he, who continually boasts of being the Savior and Redeemer of mankind, says: “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”<sup>84</sup>

The story of the good Samaritan is certainly beautiful. In it is pictured the purest philanthropy, regardless of race, creed, or position. After a priest as well as a Levite has passed the sorely wounded man without giving him the slightest aid or attention, there came a stranger, a Samaritan, in no way connected with the sufferer. Prompted solely

<sup>84</sup>Luke xii: 51-53.

by love of man for man, and sympathy for the sufferer, he gives him every aid in his power. A beautiful moral is pointed by this story.

But how did Jesus act? Was he himself a merciful Samaritan? When a woman from Canaan, who believed in his power to perform miracles, once implored him to cure her sick daughter, he at first would not deign to speak to her. When his disciples pleaded in her behalf, he answered that he had been sent only to the people to which he belonged, to the children of Israel. When the woman threw herself on her knees before him and humbly implored him to help her, he answered proudly that it was not right "to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Thus he called people, guilty of nothing but the fact that they were not Jews, "dogs" and refused to help them. This is certainly acting in direct opposition to the moral contained in the story of the good Samaritan. No matter how proud he was of the fact that he was a Jew, of his being a descendant of Abraham and David, he might still have acted with a little more "Christian love" towards this poor woman. Only after she flattered his vanity, saying: "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table," did he condescend to answer: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."<sup>85</sup>

When Jesus sent forth his apostles to announce that the kingdom of God was at hand, and to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils," he bade them emphatically not to go into the way of the Gentiles and not to enter into any city of the Samaritans, but to give their aid only to the children of Israel.<sup>86</sup> He is, therefore, no merciful Samaritan; his acts do not correspond to his words.

A most striking contradiction is to be found in the history of the passion and his death. On the one hand, he constantly speaks of his "Father," who sent him to earth to die a martyr's death and thereby take upon himself the sins of mankind. He himself "prophesied" his crucifixion

<sup>85</sup>Matt. xv: 22-28.

<sup>86</sup>Matt. x: 5-8.



and the "resurrection" that was to follow. He foretold which of his disciples would betray him to his enemies. According to this, a wise providence had arranged these events long before they actually occurred, and no human power could have prevented them from taking place. On the other hand, those who were guilty of his death, are doomed to eternal damnation. Where in all this is there any logic? If the manner of his death was previously ordained, those who accomplished it were only the tools in the hand of providence, without being in any way responsible for it themselves. He says himself: "but woe unto that man by whom the son of man is betrayed: it had been good for that man if he had not been born."<sup>87</sup>

If, as has been emphasized, he knew from the beginning who would betray him, he could easily have prevented it; in fact, he would not have needed to make the guilty man his apostle. He himself says that his death rests upon his own will. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father."<sup>88</sup> If, therefore, "no man taketh it from him," and he intentionally lays it down, why should those who, after all, served only as his tools, be sentenced to eternal damnation? How, furthermore, can the expression that he has the power to lay down his life and that no one can take it from him be reconciled with the fact that before he was taken prisoner he began to tremble and hesitate and prayed to God: "Take away this cup from me."<sup>89</sup> How does the belief in his voluntary martyr's death agree with his words "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"<sup>90</sup>

His favorite expression sounds like purest irony as it issues from his lips: "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."<sup>91</sup> This from the humble son of a carpenter, who makes him-

<sup>87</sup>Matt. xxvi: 24.      <sup>88</sup>John x: 17, 18.

<sup>89</sup>Mark xv: 34.      <sup>90</sup>Mark xiv: 33-36.

<sup>91</sup>Luke xiv: 11; Matt. xxiii: 12; Luke xviii: 14, etc.

self the "savior" of his people, "king of the Jews," "Messiah," "Son of God," "God himself."

Any number of examples could be added to prove the truth of our assertions. But wherefore? To what purpose? Any one willing to be guided by his intelligence must have recognized from the foregoing discourses the indubitable fact that Jesus was a paranoiac, and that all his actions were based on delusions and hallucinations. He must, furthermore, have come to the conclusion that the ethical principles, as they are given in the sayings of Jesus, are partly so eccentric that they lose all practical value, and partly represent the very opposite of that which has from time immemorial until the present day been considered the foundation of all culture and civilization. Besides this, his utterances are so full of the grossest contradictions that one can refer to them at will, to prove anything, right or wrong.

On the other hand, it would be futile to try to convince any one imbued with this faith handed down from past generations, and who partly voluntarily, partly involuntarily, refuses to accept any sensible arguments and proofs on this subject. As the donkey trots to the mill, so will he continue to believe, and every logical process of reasoning will seem a crime to him. Christ himself says that he does not appeal to the "wise and prudent," but to the "minors."

Like all other religions, the Jewish religion gave rise to differences of opinion among the priests and scholars, which led to the formation of different sects. The Gospel mentions only two, while Josephus describes four such sects, which existed among the Jews at the time of Christ.

The sect which had by far the most members was that of the "Pharisees." Through Christ the name "Pharisee" has come into very bad repute. Through his unlimited abuse, through the many opprobrious epithets he heaped on them, the word "Pharisee" has become a nickname. But as a matter of fact, the Pharisees were neither better nor worse than men of their position among other nations and during other periods of history. They believed in the following doctrines:

Besides the laws laid down in the books of Moses, they had an oral tradition which has been handed down from generation to generation and was equally important as the written laws to them. They classed all the customs and traditions that they had inherited in the idea of "piety" and in consequence constructed a certain norm for the whole of life, which covered all activities of man, from morning until night, from birth until the grave. The mere ceremonies, such as fasting, praying, purifications and others of a like character, were therefore frequently made the main factors, at the expense of the real essence of religion. They believed in the existence of angels, in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, and in reward and punishment in the "hereafter." Politically, the Pharisees were really the national party. They were theocrats, in the sense of the word that God alone ruled over "his people." Therefore, they strove for independence as a nation, and were active opponents of the followers of Herod.

The main principle of the second sect, the Sadducees, was the observance of strict Monotheism. Jehovah was not, to them, merely the "only, eternal God," but the only spiritual being. Consequently they believed neither in angels nor devils. They did not believe in resurrection, nor in a "hereafter." The individual life of man ended with his death. Thus their worship of God was free from abject fear of punishment, as well as from egotistical hope of reward. They were not fatalists, but believed in the full responsibility of the individual for his actions.

The remaining two sects, the Galileans and the Essenes, had partly a political meaning, especially the former one, or consisted, like the latter, of a certain brotherhood like the many orders that came into being later on in the Christian world. The purpose of their lives was the purification of the spirit of all sensual pleasures, by means of seclusion from the world, by prayer and meditation. Like the Pharisees, they had a rigid ceremonial whose strict observance was their chief duty. They despised trade, as well as all personal property. They formed a sort of

communism and lived in villages and colonies far from the cities, the profane splendors of which frightened them.

Christ came in contact with only the first two sects, with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and this accounts for the fact that the Gospel mentions only these. He came in conflict with the Pharisees in particular. What he criticises most was their immense ceremonial. It was not the manner of the ceremonies, not this or that custom, not the nature of their usages, with which he reproached them, but the ceremonies as such that aroused his dissatisfaction. In the execution of any rite or custom he saw hypocrisy, if these actions concerned externalities.

When he was reproached for neglecting to wash his hands before eating, he called the people who believed that by external washing they could purify themselves, hypocrites. The cleanliness of man meant cleanliness or purity of the soul, not "whatsoever entereth in at the mouth, . . . but those things which proceed out of the mouth . . . defile the man."<sup>92</sup>

With the remarks he made here, that external cleansing was no sign of inward purity, every sensible person will, without doubt, agree. But surely no one will criticise the custom of washing the hands before eating; a law requiring that among the oriental nations certainly was made for good reasons.

The conflict between him and the Pharisees in this case was based on the fact that the observance of an outward ceremony must necessarily be at the cost of actual righteousness. Why could not a person obey such a law, that is, to wash his hands before eating, and still be respectable? That he saw a necessity for opposition in these things is again due to the character of his mental condition, his paranoia.

Washing the hands is, as probably no one will deny, a custom quite necessary for hygienic reasons. But there are a great many ceremonies which lack such a useful foundation. Nevertheless, it would be folly to accuse of hypocrisy all those who cling to these ceremonies. Ceremonies

<sup>92</sup>Matt. xv: 17, 18.

are a necessity based on the inmost nature of man. It is quite true, that ceremonies as such, are useless and vain, and have no real value. They sprang from the weakness of the human mind, from the impossibility to grasp in its entirety the mental essence of things not perceptible to the senses. They are founded on the fact that it is necessary to influence the masses by material representations. Consequently, we find a ceremonial, not only in the practice of religion, but in all the domains of human endeavor. In political and in social life, in public as well as in private organizations of men, in the highest circles of society, and in the laboring classes, everywhere, we see that ceremonies are considered of great importance, without, however, affecting the character of the thing itself.

Religion without ceremonies cannot well be imagined. Without ceremonies there can be no religious observances. The religious ceremonial stands in relation to religious thought as the word to the conception, in psychology. The fact is that up to the present day there has been no religion without a ceremonial.

The ceremonial of the Catholic Church, is certainly as elaborate as that of the Pharisees; in their main traits the two are almost identical. Here, as well as there, we find the sprinkling with holy water, fasting, the many prayers, the observance of holidays, etc., etc. As to pomp and splendor, the Catholic Church outdoes by far anything that existed before it, and one may safely take for granted that the ceremonial of the Catholic Church is in every respect much more elaborate than that of the Pharisees. But Protestant countries, too, have their ceremonials. Keeping the Sabbath holy could not have been more rigidly observed among the Pharisees than it is in England, Scotland, and Norway.

Among the Jews, ceremonies had a higher, more sacred, meaning than among any other people. As has been repeatedly emphasized in the foregoing chapters, the Jews had a theocracy in the strictest sense of the word. They considered themselves the "chosen people," at whose head stood God himself, as ruler and king. The content of

Moses' hallucinations, which is at the bottom of all those laws, consisted, for the greatest part, of God's instructions, regarding all the customs and usages of life. Consequently, the ceremonial of the Jews was not, as among other nations, a symbolization of divine ideas, but represented the direct commands and laws of God, as given by him to his people. Why, on Mount Sinai God stated exactly out of what material the robes of the priests should be made, how the buttons and ornaments were to be put on, etc., etc. In this manner God himself gave a ceremonial that was specified to the minutest detail, the absolute observance of which is part of the Jewish religion. One must bear this circumstance in mind, to judge correctly the exaggerated adherence to ceremonies that was characteristic of the Jews at all times.

The Pharisees were special advocates of the theocratic principle, and, as a result, the ceremonial instructions given by God were doubly sacred to them. Just imagine, in view of all this, what an influence it must have had on them, when the humble carpenter's son one day appeared before them, scoffed at their holiest traditions and publicly abused them for observing the same.

One of their most important laws was the strict observance of the Sabbath. When they reproached Jesus for having broken this law, he answered them: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."<sup>93</sup> This remark undoubtedly sounds very apt and intelligent. But the same can be said of all other ceremonial laws and usages. How does this utterance agree with the remark which immediately follows: "The son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Here his delusions of grandeur again become evident, inasmuch as he looks upon the Sabbath as something belonging to him, and of which he can dispose at will. According to his view, he could absolve people from obeying the laws in question, he being the "Lord of the Sabbath."

This speech was doubly exasperating to the Pharisees ;

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<sup>93</sup>Mark ii: 2.

first, because it broke the law, and, secondly, because it was a blasphemy.

To form an idea of what an influence the actions and the speeches of Jesus must have had on the High-Priests and Pharisees, try for a moment to transplant those occurrences to the present. Imagine a man of 33 years, belonging to the lower classes, a mechanic, who suddenly forces his way before the highest dignitaries of the realm, in Catholic countries before bishops and cardinals or perhaps even before the Pope himself, and in the presence of the people, abuses these men, because they are clothed in silken robes, because they follow strictly the laws and statutes, because they keep the Sabbath holy. Just imagine him calling them "hypocrites," "thieves," "murderers," declaring that they are "serpents" and "vipers," because they conscientiously observe all the prescribed rituals, because they sprinkle themselves with holy water! Imagine him, the son of an ordinary workingman, who until then had lived in obscurity, saying to the first men of the State, such as princes and kings, that whores and usurers could sooner enter the kingdom of heaven, than they. Just imagine such a situation! As to those men, the leaders of the people, there is absolutely no difference between then and now. The High-Priests and Pharisees were neither better nor worse than the bishops and cardinals of today, nor than counts and princes, *c'est tout à fait la même chose*. What would cardinals do, how would princes act, if today they were publicly denounced by a person belonging to the working class? What would they do? You must not fail to ask yourself this question and to answer it honestly, before passing judgment on the most prominent event in the entire history of the world.

Here, as everywhere, there is again a marked contradiction between the various utterances and actions of Jesus. On the one hand he condemns the ceremonies, and abuses the Pharisees, because they attribute too much importance to them. On the other he says that baptism is the highest, holiest, thing in life, without which no one can be "saved." But what is baptism other than the "washing" of the Phari-

sees? Both ceremonies are symbolical of purification from sin. Why, then, should the one be ignored and even scoffed at, while the other is lauded to the sky? Where are logic and justice, in this matter? Washing the hands before eating, serves at the same time a practical, hygienic purpose. while baptism has absolutely no reasonable or practical object.

In spite of all this, there were some among the Pharisees on whom his "miracles" made such an impression that they believed in him. Thus Nicodemus went to Jesus to get an explanation directly from his own lips. But poor Nicodemus! Jesus held a discourse with him on the content of his delusions, during which the listener felt as if he had wheels in his head. Jesus spoke about the mysteries of the resurrection through water and the Holy Ghost. "How can that be? How can such things happen?" was all that the listener, ready and willing to believe, could answer, in his dilemma. But just the incomprehensibility, the mysteriousness, of the thing has always attracted and "converted" people. Indeed, there are a great many people who have boundless respect for everything they do not understand. "Some deep wisdom must be hidden in this," they tell themselves in their ignorance, and give the mysterious "the benefit of the doubt."

While the Christian religion, with the exception of the doctrine appertaining to Christ himself, is borrowed from the Pharisees, inasmuch as both believe in the resurrection of the dead, the immortality of the soul, in heaven and hell, angels and devils, the doctrine of the Sadducees, is altogether opposed to all this. For them there was only one spiritual being, that is, God. They recognized neither angels nor devils, heaven nor hell, and did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Consequently their God could not possibly have a son. Jesus' entire doctrine contradicted the very essence of their convictions.

It is true, the Jews, irrespective of their religious belief, all looked forward to the coming of the Savior, promised them by the Prophets. But for them, as for the Prophets, he was of purely political importance. They expected a



great hero who would "save" them from the oppression of a "heathen" nation, from the humiliating yoke of the Romans. They expected a mighty king, who would raise the "chosen people" once more to the height on which it once had stood, who would make all the other nations of the earth subject to them. Only through the theocratic notions of the Jews did this purely political idea gain a certain religious meaning, religion and politics being merged into one by them.

Therefore, the Sadducees, even less than the Pharisees, could reconcile themselves to a Messiah in the sense of Christ. The person of Jesus, as well as his doctrines, must have appeared to them as something impossible, unimaginable. To believe in him was for them an absolute impossibility.

In spite of all this, in spite of all these unheard of conditions, in spite of the public insults and abuses, heaped on the leaders and dignitaries of the people, no forcible measures would have been taken against Jesus, if nothing more than religious views had been in question, even though these had diverged ever so far from the generally accepted faith.

But, without being conscious of it himself, Jesus became a most imminent danger to the community. He appealed, as he himself always stated, not to the "wise and intelligent," but to the "minors." To these "minors," or in other words, the lowest class of the population, the proletariat, he not only preached religious ideas, but instigated them against the upper classes in a positively frightful manner. He tried to humiliate the authorities and leaders of the people, in every respect, in the eyes of this rabble. He accused them publicly, insulted and abused them; he left them not a shred of goodness. The worst of it was, that, unlike the many demagogues who spread discontent among the people, he did not advocate any political or social principle, and attacked the leaders, not under the impulsion of such principles, but because he condemned the wealthy classes merely for the reason that they possessed property. He tried to make the proletariat believe that the rich were

doomed to eternal damnation, because they were rich, and that to the rabble—whether good or bad—belonged the eternal kingdom of God.

He instigated the rabble against everything that the priests and scholars taught, no matter whether they were things of importance or not. The mere fact that they constituted the upper class of the people was enough to publicly condemn every act of theirs, every one of their customs and usages. He did not hesitate to make use of the argument so frequently used by agitators of the people: "Your leaders command you to work, yet they do not stir a hand." "For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne; and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."<sup>94</sup> They performed their functions only to be seen by the people.

Because, according to the custom then in vogue, they wore broad hems on their clothes, and because they followed the Mosaic law and wore certain "fringes," "to remember all the commandments of the Lord,"<sup>95</sup> he accuses them before the rabble. He uses the facts that they "love the uppermost rooms at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues," and that they like "greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi,"<sup>96</sup> to instigate the rabble against them. He orders the proletariat to treat their priests with disrespect, and not to call them Rabbi, Father, Master, Lord, etc., for one only was their Rabbi, Father, Master, Lord, and that was he himself.<sup>97</sup> They were all equals, the "Masters," the "Lords," and the rabble, having no privileges, one more than the other, for he was their Lord! "HE!" And immediately following this, like an ever-recurring refrain, we have: "He who exalts himself, he shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself, he shall be exalted." Which place, we wonder, will he occupy? He, the one and only "Lord" and "Master." A beautiful career that, from carpenter's apprentice to Lord of the Universe, in the course of a year! How does this agree with "exalting one's self?"

<sup>94</sup>Matt. xxiii: 4.      <sup>95</sup>Num. xv: 39.

<sup>96</sup>Matt. xxiii: 6, 7.    <sup>97</sup>Matt. xxiii: 8-10.

We must again ask the reader who is really anxious to form an objective and correct opinion on this subject, the most important event of history, to exercise once more his imagination and transplant this event to the present time. This should not be difficult. It is true, two thousand years have passed; but human nature was the same then as it is now. Today we have steam and electricity, we have railroads, telegraphy, wireless telegraphy, we are even beginning to master the air, but—human beings have remained the same. They love and hate, they laugh and weep, they rejoice exuberantly and are desolate and despondent with grief, today, as they were two thousand years ago. Nothing in human nature has changed, nor will it soon change.

Therefore—other costumes, other decorations, and the curtain may safely be raised. The actors will follow the same laws as were followed two thousand years ago. Instead of Jerusalem, let the place of action be called, Washington, Rome, Paris, or Berlin. A man belonging to the working class forces his way into the presence of the highest dignitaries of the place in question, as for instance, into that of the President of a Republic, or the Pope, or the Kaiser. Him, as well as his surroundings, his secretaries and assistants, the working-man denounces in the coarsest manner. He gathers the rabble in the street and not only instigates them against their leaders, but tells them that they are far better than all the men connected with the government. He abuses everything the latter do, their customs and laws, in the most unbridled language, and forbids the people to respect or honor in any way their highest officials, for only one is their Lord and King, and that one is he; he, whom God has sent to mankind. Furthermore, no one need work, no one need worry or care about the future, for he will see to it that all who follow him shall be abundantly cared for. He makes the rabble the most preposterous promises, and assures everyone who shall refuse to obey those in power, and follow him, eternal salvation.

The rabble greets him with shouts and rejoicing, and worships him as the Savior and Redeemer of mankind.

Because the people believe in him implicitly, he is in a position to exercise an enormous suggestive influence on them. He uses this to come forward as a divine healer, to free the sick from their sufferings. The people stream to him in hordes. The greater the number of his followers and adorers, the more astounding become the marvelous cures that he performs. ~~██████████~~

And now, mounted on a donkey and surrounded by the rejoicing and worshipping rabble, he makes his solemn entrance into Rome, or Washington, or Berlin. The mob, numbering thousands of men and women, greets him with shouts and acclamations, and proclaims him king.

What, in such a case, would the quiet, thoughtful part of the population do? How would educated people act? What measures, what precautions, would the government take against such a demonstration?

Of course it would never be allowed to go so far today. The authorities would not wait as long as they did in Jerusalem. At the first public disturbance, the man would be arrested by the police and placed into custody. Indeed, in a monarchical country, the first insulting word would be sufficient to cause the imprisonment of the "Savior of Mankind" for lezé majesty.

Now, what would you expect of the authorities in Jerusalem, at that time? What should they have done? Place yourself in their position, and then say, impartially, what they should or could have done. A quiet, passive attitude, such as they had already kept too long, would have led to mob rule, which would then have been put to an end by the interference of the Roman soldiers, a procedure, the main feature of which would have been a wholesale massacre of the Jews, which already at that time was a very popular occupation.

Before resorting to forcible measures against Jesus, no means were left untried to avert in a peaceable manner the threatening danger of a rising of the mob. The Pharisees tried to induce him to leave the country, by telling him that Herod intended to kill him.<sup>98</sup> But, in genuinely paranoïcal

<sup>98</sup>Luke xiii : 31.

fashion, he saw in this advice only a new conspiracy against him.

The leaders of the people found themselves between Scylla and Charybdis, between the threatening danger of a mob, instigated and aroused by a visionary, and the keen blade of the Roman army. What could they do in a situation the dangers and difficulties of which can not be overestimated? Further application of the policy of *laissez aller*, even in the interest of the people, would have been a crime. To what would the infatuation of the proletariat have led? Just imagine the situation which would have developed, if Jesus had been allowed free rein, if all the people had followed him blindly, like a flock of sheep! He had commanded the people not to work, not to worry about the morrow, to have no care for food and clothing. Everything that he asked for them, was their faith in him, their God. If they believed in him, they would receive everything they desired. Now if the people had obeyed this command, if the wealthy had given away their fortunes, if all the people had prostrated themselves, on their knees before the great "Messiah," without working, without bothering about the necessities of life, what would have become of them? The direst need, the greatest misery that the world had ever seen would have resulted. Prayers would hardly have satisfied the hunger of the masses. Mothers would not have been able to satisfy the hunger of their crying children with baptism and prayers. We will leave it to the imagination of the reader to picture to himself the situation to which it must have come, if the entire Jewish nation had followed this insane man, and carried out his commands.

What dimensions, on the part of the proletariat, the danger had assumed already, can be seen from the fact that Jesus had to be taken prisoner at night, so as to avoid an uprising of the people. Upon being brought before the High-Priest, Jesus said that he was the Son of God and would from now on sit on the right hand of God and appear in the clouds of Heaven.<sup>99</sup> According to the custom

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<sup>99</sup>Matt. xxvi: 64.

of that time, the High-Priest tore his robe to show his horror at this "blasphemy."

What, today, would the Pope or a high official of the Church, or a reigning prince do, if the son of a working-man appeared before him and said he was the son of God and was going to sit at his right hand in the clouds? You must always bear clearly in mind that in this respect there is absolutely no difference between today and two thousand years ago. Just as easily as "God" then sent a "Son" to the earth, he could do it today, or he could even send the same son again. As a fact, there are quite a number of persons who state with the same conviction that Jesus did, that they are Christ, and believe that they have been "sent" by their heavenly Father. But today, such people are put into institutions for the insane. Today, every layman is ready to declare insane any person professing to be "Christ."

At that time the High-Priest, who knew nothing of mental diseases, there being no chair of psychiatry in Jerusalem, could naturally see only a blasphemy in Jesus' utterances, and, therefore, exclaimed with horror, "He hath spoken blasphemy."<sup>100</sup>

Blaspheming God was considered by the Jews the greatest crime and was, until not very long ago, among Christians, also, punished by death. Nevertheless, it can be seen from the fact that they sought to persuade Jesus to leave the country, that they tried to avoid putting him to death. But his influence on the people was too dangerous to continue quietly letting matters go on in the way they were. His arrest was a necessity, and as has already been mentioned, would have occurred much sooner in our day. The excitement and infatuation of the rabble made it impossible to keep him prisoner. Therefore, what remained to be done?

The cruelty and brutality of death by crucifixion must naturally fill everyone with horror. Crucifixion, however, was not, as many people seem to believe, a Jewish institution, but was a Roman mode of capital punishment. The

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<sup>100</sup>Matt. xxvi: 65.

real executioners of Jesus were therefore the Romans, of course, urged to it by the Jews who accused him of blaspheming God.

Thus this great drama that, in view of its effect on posterity, is unique in the history of the world, ended with the gruesome death of this poor insane man. Were fame and honor after death an equivalent for the sufferings endured in life, Jesus Christ would certainly have been compensated for the cruel tortures of his death, prepared for him by his contemporaries, far more than the hundreds of thousands of people who in later years were tortured to death or burned at the stake, "in the name of Jesus Christ" by his followers.

As to the "resurrection" and "ascension" of Jesus, it would serve no purpose to waste many words on them. Anyone who believes in these legends, anyone who today is imbued with the idea that a Jew crucified two thousand years ago occupies a place in heaven and sits in judgment on mankind, will remain unconvinced even by the most plausible and logical arguments. On the other hand, for anyone who recognizes the "resurrection" and the "ascension" as myths, it will be immaterial how they originated. The four Evangelists differ as to the details of this story. They agree only in its main features. By permission of Pilate, a rich man, called Joseph of Arimathæa, placed the corpse of Jesus in a cave which was near the place of crucifixion. On the following day, the cave, whose entrance was closed by a huge block of stone, was found to be empty. Obviously, the corpse had been taken away during the night; it is even possible that the corpse had not been placed there at all. What really occurred in this matter, and who was responsible for it, we are unable to state positively today.

The first one to whom Jesus "appeared" on the following day, was Mary Magdalene, "out of whom he had driven seven devils."<sup>101</sup> Translated into the language of the present day, this means that Miss Mary Magdalene was a thoroughly hysterical person, who suffered from hystero-

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<sup>101</sup>Mark xvi: 9.

epileptical attacks, which would pass off without the process of "driving out the devil." That an individual so predisposed, in a condition of excessive excitement, such as must have existed on this occasion, should have experienced some hallucinations, cannot astonish us. Christ had spoken incessantly to his disciples about his resurrection, and when the place of burial was found to be empty, psychopathic individuals, like Mary Magdalene, found ample cause for hallucinations arising therefrom.

One can easily imagine how, thereupon, the young lady, in truly hysterical fashion, ran about, telling all the people what a miracle she had encountered, that she and she alone had witnessed the resurrection of the Savior. But in spite of his own prophecies, concerning his resurrection, and in spite of Mary Magdalene's assurance that he had appeared to her, no one believed her, neither his disciples nor his sorrowing family.<sup>102</sup>

In the story of how Jesus later appeared to his disciples, the Evangelists differ materially. Only in this do they agree, that the disciples did not recognize him. In Mark it is even directly stated that Jesus "appeared in another form unto two of them."<sup>103</sup>

Most probably some other paranoiac took it into his head to be Jesus Christ, as paranoiacs have frequently done up to the present day. It is, therefore, quite possible that such a Pseudo-Jesus "appeared in another form" to the disciples, and reproached them, without further ceremony, for their lack of faith in him. As to the "stigmata," it is a well-known fact that they were produced by paranoïcal and hysterical "Saints," at all periods of history, on their own persons, and it was doubtless such an individual in whose wounds "doubting Thomas" put his fingers. Can you imagine that the disciples who were with Jesus constantly, for several years, should not have recognized him, or should have needed particular proofs that it was really he who had dwelt with them?

For a more complete understanding of this personification of Jesus by another paranoiac, as well as for a clear

<sup>102</sup>Mark xvi: 11.

<sup>103</sup>Mark xvi: 12.



understanding of the personality of Jesus himself, it will be advisable to cast a fleeting glance at the many so-called "false Messiahs" who have made their appearance in the course of centuries. Today these people are called impostors, though thereby an injustice is done them. They were no more impostors than were Moses, the Prophets, and Jesus Christ. They belong to the same class of paranoiacs and were, like their predecessors, fully convinced of their divine mission.

The first Messiah of this sort, who was of any importance, after Jesus, was Barchorab, who, supported by Rabbi Akiba, caused an uprising against Emperor Hadrian.

In the fifth century, on the Isle of Crete, there was a "Messiah" who became known by the name of "Moses Cretensis." He claimed that he was "Moses," descended from Heaven to free the Jews and to lead them through the sea to the Promised land. (How genuinely paranoiacal!) He gained an enormous influence over the masses, so that thousands of persons became his enthusiastic followers. When at the very pinnacle of his fame, he gathered together all the people who were loyal to him, on a rocky eminence by the sea, and let men, women, and children jump down and plunge into the seething waters, from which all of them expected a wonderful rescue. Thousands of people in this way lost their lives through blind faith in the "Messiah" who was to save them.

During the reign of Emperor Justinian there appeared a "Messiah" called Julianus, whom the Jews and Samaritans made their king. Justinian, however, made war on those taking part in the uprising, took their "Messiah" prisoner, and had him beheaded.

At the beginning of the seventh century, Mohammed appeared on the stage of the world's history. He belonged to the same category as did his colleagues, Moses, Elias, Jesus, Barchorab, and whatever these paranoiacal gentlemen may all have been called. His history and his enormous influence on his fellow-men are too well known to be specially described here.

Paranoia being a widespread disease, appearing among

all nations, the psychical predisposition creating "Prophets" and "Messiahs" is to be found everywhere, and in consequence we actually meet such people among all nations, and at all periods of history. There was a certain Severus, in Spain, who appeared as a "Messiah" in the eighth century. In 1137 there appeared simultaneously, in France and in Persia, two "Messiahs," who created great sensations and won a large following, but finally, like all the others, were put to death.

The history of the Jews, reckoned from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, shows no less than sixty-four such Messiahs. The most interesting among them was a certain Sabbathai Seri from Smyrna, who in 1648 publicly appeared and proclaimed himself the "Messiah of the house of David," come to free the Israelites from the rule of the Christians and the Mussulmans. He caused the following notices to be spread among the people: "The Messiah has come, and will in a short time take unto himself the turban and the crown of the Sultan. Then he will go away for a while, with Moses, to seek the ten tribes who are hidden on the other side of the river Sabbathon, and bring them back. Then, mounted on a lion which has come down from heaven and whose head is like a seven-headed serpent, he will enter Jerusalem in a solemn triumphal procession. But before this he will have killed all his enemies by the breath of his mouth. Then Jerusalem will come down from its eminence, and decked with gold and precious stones, the Messiah himself will bring sacrifices. Then will follow the resurrection of the dead, combined with many other 'exhibitions' which cannot be disclosed yet."

The author of this proclamation was not, could not be, an impostor, as one is accustomed to call the "false Messiahs." On the contrary, he is such a typical paranoiac that the laymen ought to be able to make the diagnosis without difficulty. Nevertheless, or perhaps because of it—he became the founder of a sect, the Sabbathists, who maintained themselves for over a century.

You must not suppose that we, today, are immune against paranoical Prophets and Messiahs. It is true, we

know that these people are insane, that their thoughts and actions are governed by delusions and hallucinations; indeed psychiatrists by profession know this, and try to instruct the public in this respect. And still, one must almost blush to admit the truth—in spite of all this, it has been possible at the present time, “in this enlightened age,” in a country that likes to hear itself called the “country of the future,” for a paranoiac called Dowie, and proclaiming himself the Prophet Elias II. to found not only a congregation, but an entire city where he, the God-sent Prophet, was absolute ruler. For years this city maintained itself and could boast of a steady growth. The “Prophet,” like Moses, Elias, and Christ, was in permanent communication with God and governed his people according to his will. His mission, like that of Christ, was to purify the whole world of its sins and to procure eternal salvation for mankind. Just as Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, so Elias the Second, that is Mr. Dowie, one day entered New York, of course, not mounted on a donkey, but in a luxurious special train consisting of a long row of Pullman cars, surrounded by his disciples and functionaries. The Prophet-business being evidently very remunerative, there were many malicious and envious people who saw in him only a good business man. But in this they did him an injustice. He believed in his divine mission just as Christ and the Prophets in olden times did in theirs.

When the train pulled into New York Station, the Prophet stood on the front platform of his car, and spreading out his arms, he cried: “Thus at last I seize you, New York, you sinful city.” Though he did not, like Christ, go to Mount Olivet, there to preach his great sermon, he preached in the largest halls in the city to gatherings of thousands of persons, the curiosity of the people being roused to the highest pitch.

Occurrences like this would certainly be comical and amusing if there were not, at the same time, a so deeply tragic side to them. The fact that all the scientific accomplishments that we enjoy today, are not able to govern or counteract the superstition of the masses; that, in spite of

the fact that we know that an individual is insane, he can today gain an almost equally great influence over the masses as was possible two thousand years ago, when a scientific knowledge of insanity had not yet been thought of, is sad.

But if we ask ourselves why the people are today yet in the thrall of superstition, if we ask how it is possible that single insane individuals are yet able today to befool the people with the most nonsensical delusions; if we ask ourselves how it can be that in a country like America, not only the rabble but just the so-called educated people are drawn into the snares of the Christian-Science swindle by one insane woman, we must admit that it is not the people, as such, not an inherited weakness in human nature which feeds and sustains superstitions continually, but that the cause of superstition lies in the education of the people, that the doctrines which are taught to children in school and preached to the people from the pulpit are responsible for the fatal superstitions which are today as fertile a soil for insane doctrines as they were two thousand years ago.

For what is the difference whether I believe in a Prophet sent by God or a Messiah who lived two thousand years ago, or am ready to believe that today a Prophet has been sent to the world by God? The whole Christian world worships an insane Jew, who was crucified two thousand years ago, and all the Jews are still anxiously awaiting the coming of the Messiah, promised them by insane Prophets. If such idiotic doctrines, based on unquestionable insanity, are taught to children in school, and preached to the people in church, can it be wondered at that the people cherish these superstitions even today? Why should these supposed divinities be different today from what they were two thousand years ago? It is, in fact, astonishing how many people are absolutely skeptical about every supernatural occurrence of today, such as divine revelations and the like, but believe faithfully in those wonderful occurrences described in the Gospel and in the Old Testament. Does contradictory silly nonsense grow any more sensible merely by the passing of a long span of time? The

world is and will remain the same as it was several thousand years ago, and to all people seeking the truth a scientific interpretation of those happenings in olden times, which have influenced the entire civilized world for thousands of years, is and will be an absolute necessity.

## VIII. THE FOUNDING OF CHRISTIANITY.

### I. CHRIST'S DISCIPLES.

As was expressly stated in the last chapter, Christ was by no means the only one who believed himself the Son of God and the Messiah, and as such won an enormous influence over his fellowmen. Had the phenomenon "Christ" subsided some time after his death, it would not have differed from the other examples of Messiahs above mentioned. What makes the phenomenon unique in its way, what differentiates it from every other analogous manifestation, is the fact that the belief in Jesus Christ, in his divine origin, has spread throughout the world, and has remained until the present day the cardinal factor of the religion of almost every civilized nation. In school, children are taught that Christianity triumphed over the "heathenism" of ancient nations, that to Christianity mankind owes its highest ideals, and that the entire modern civilization owes its gradual development and its steady advancement solely and alone to Christianity.

In the last chapter we undertook a psychical analysis of the person of Jesus Christ. In doing so we could not avoid drawing attention to the enormous contradictions that are contained in his doctrines. We must, therefore, first of all make clear what we are to understand by "Christianity." His doctrines are partly so contradictory, partly so impractical and impossible of execution, that an ethical system based on them is inconceivable. Furthermore, ethical and social views have so changed during the course of centuries, among the various Christian nations, that there really is no such thing as a universal doctrine

applying to all times, and all nations, which could be called "Christianity." The only point on which all Christian nations, at all periods of history, agree, is the belief in the divine nature of Jesus Christ and the mystical doctrine of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Recently, it is true, a new sect has arisen—the Unitarian, which does not uphold this point either. As to the rest, ethically as well as dogmatically, the most heterogeneous things are included in the term "Christianity." According to the requirements of those in power for the time being, the most widely differing ethical views have been preached as the "Christian doctrine," and one may safely state that the Christian Church did not express a single moral principle, the direct opposite of which was not preached with the same enthusiasm at some other time or by some other sects. The most horrible crimes, legal as well as moral, such as lying, intrigue, bribery, theft, murder, the most inhuman cruelties, nay, the most barbarous torture of human beings by their fellowmen, were not only practiced by Christian nations, but were justified and even commanded as acts of piety, by the heads of the Christian Church, and anyone who dared to protest against them or even to criticise them, became a victim himself of these horrible doctrines at the stake or in the torture-chamber—and all this was done "in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." "Christianity," therefore, by no means represents a standard doctrine, but is nothing but a name for an abundance of customs and teachings, undergoing the most manifold changes at the various periods of history.

The more difficult but also the more important consideration is the answer to the question of what benefit has Christianity been to mankind. No matter what one may think of Christ, no matter whether Christ was a God or only an insane Jew, no matter what one may understand by the term "Christianity," if it can be proven that Christianity really ennobled mankind, that we really owe our modern civilization to Christianity, that without it, mankind would have remained in a state of barbarism—then, "Christianity" has indeed been the greatest blessing ever

bestowed on mankind, and the preservation and pursuit of "Christianity" must be the most sacred duty of every human being to whom the improvement of man is dear. But—the proof!

The great success which Christ enjoyed in the Jewish nation during his life, he owed altogether to the lowest class, the rabble. The educated class considered this young carpenter's son, who claimed that he was the Son of God, the king of all the nations of the earth, an impostor, just as, in a like case, the educated world would do today. While they at first looked down upon him with indifference and scorn, they gradually recognized in him a social danger, which was augmented to the highest point, when, surrounded by a jubilant mob and mounted on a donkey, he made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

The anxiety which now began to make itself felt among the wealthy and educated, was surely not unfounded. It is well known that the mob has always been ready to listen to an agitator and to become incensed against the upper classes. Philosophical or religious considerations or ethical doctrines scarcely won the hearts of the proletarians for Christ. What aroused the mob to enthusiasm for him, were his promises concerning the new kingdom in which "the last should be first," in which the rich should starve while the poor, like Lazarus, would revel in abundance. His unrelenting hatred towards all the wealthy, his invectives against and attacks on the heads of the State, against the High-Priests and all other prominent people, won him the sympathies of the common people, as has always, in every period of history, been the case with demagogues. What served as a guarantee for his eccentric promises, what accredited him as the Son of God, the Messiah, were his many miraculous cures, the natural basis of which was explained in the last chapter. Nothing is so liable to win the sympathy of the Jewish people as miraculous cures of sufferings and deformities. Do we not, today, see the most orthodox Jews run to the Christian Science churches with the same enthusiasm with which the rabble, two thousand years ago, welcomed a paranoiac, riding on a donkey?



Christ, who soon found out that only the rabble had faith in him, went so far in his paranoical naïvete, as to exclaim: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."<sup>104</sup> Such "babes," or, in other words ignorant, uncouth fellows from the very dregs of the people, Christ made his apostles, to spread the "kingdom of God," throughout the world. Just imagine such a situation today! A carpenter's son, surrounded by a crowd of fishermen and a proletariat made up of the very lowest dregs of civilization existing at that time, abusing every one who does not believe in his divine origin and the kingdom to be founded by him! The good fishermen, whom by an unusually lucky draught, Christ won for himself, were naturally filled with pride and self-conceit at being the first to enter the new kingdom that was to rule the world. By this "kingdom of God" they did not imagine anything figurative or metaphysical, as is done today, but believed, like Christ himself, in a mighty kingdom on whose throne Jesus would sit and govern the world. Good Peter, to whom Christ had promised the keys of the kingdom, appeared mightily important to himself in his position as porter, and was fully convinced that he was to lock and unlock the ponderous gate of the kingdom. The mother of his two colleagues, James and John, went, as intercessor, to Jesus, to beg him on her knees to reserve good seats in the new kingdom for her sons. "Grant that these, my two sons, may sit, the one on thy right hand, the other on the left in thy kingdom,"<sup>105</sup> Probably she considered herself entitled to such a favor on account of her relationship to the "virgin" Mary. You see, there was "pull" at that time, as there is today.

These simple, naïve fishermen, who stood on the lowest rung of intellectual development, were to be the messengers and propagators of the religion that was to rule the world.

Already during his lifetime, Christ sent not only his twelve apostles, but seventy of his disciples, to the differ-

<sup>104</sup>Luke x: 21.

<sup>105</sup>Matt. xx: 21.

ent cities and towns to spread his fame among the people. Everywhere it is these two factors to which Christ's heralds owed their success, the healing of the sick and the promises that had been made to the poor. The people flocked to them in hordes, to have every possible hysterical ailment cured. Hysterical paralysis, blindness, mutism, conditions of psychical depression, hystero-epileptical attacks—all these were cured by the disciples of Christ with marvelous promptness. Far from recognizing the true nature of the diseases and the scientific foundation of his therapeutic success, Christ saw in these results his divine power, and his disciples as well as the great mass of the people shared this belief. Mistaking epileptiform attacks for devils and evil spirits, the disciples believed that through the power invested in them they could control heaven and hell. "Lord," they cried joyfully, "even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." "Behold," answered Christ, "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."<sup>106</sup>

As to those promises, made to the rabble, they by no means confined themselves any longer to compensation in a hereafter, but advocated social communistical ideas, such as at all times of history formed the bait used by demagogues. But the communism of Christ was not based on social principles, which could have been materialized at least theoretically, but he demanded—in, one might say, puerile innocence—the distribution of all wealth, regardless of who would take care of the acquisition of new provisions. This was a communism of consumption with utter disregard of production. In our time you could not impress even the rabble with such ideas. Every workingman of today knows that work is necessary for life, and the problem of modern Socialism is based on a scientific distribution of labor.

No sane person, today, believes that mankind could live on in continual enjoyment unless some one performed the necessary work. Christ, however, commanded his disciples:

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<sup>106</sup>Luke x: 17-19.

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. . . . Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them; how much more are ye better than the fowls?"<sup>107</sup>

A communism which begins by abolishing every kind of work, a social condition in which mankind flourish like "the lilies in the field," who "toil not, neither do they spin," a life in which there are no duties except only to have faith—such an existence must surely have seemed ideal to a heavily oppressed proletariat, at that time. In shoals they streamed to the flag of the "Messiah." And when, at last, the idol of the people, "the Son of God," the "Savior of mankind," had to suffer the cruel death on the cross, the smoldering fire burst into flames which were to spread over the whole world.

The idea of community of goods was not strange to the Jews even in those days. Josephus tells us<sup>108</sup> of a philosophical sect, the Essenes, who almost a hundred years before Christ formed a communism among themselves. All those who wished to join this community had to hand over their fortunes for the common use of the members, so that no one could suffer want nor live in superabundance. This organization had spread over a large number of cities, so that if its members traveled from place to place, they needed to take nothing with them, as anywhere the property of the brothers was at their disposal.

Communism in consuming, regardless of the production of the necessary provisions, was the keynote of the doctrine that was preached by his disciples after Christ's death. The proletarians who had nothing to lose, and were assured of a life without worry, flocked in hordes to embrace this new doctrine. Peter won "three thousand souls" in one day.<sup>109</sup> Those who belonged to the propertied class had to "sell their goods and chattels," so that these could be distributed equally among the brothers. The complete surrender of all personal property was the first condition of

<sup>107</sup>Luke xii: 22-24.

<sup>108</sup>Josephus' reports of the Jewish War, 11, 8.      <sup>109</sup>Acts ii: 41.

membership in this new brotherhood. "Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."<sup>110</sup> This law was carried out with the utmost rigidity. When Peter discovered that Ananias and his wife Sapphira had secretly kept some of their possessions, they were both put to death—by "God, the Lord."

This new communistic brotherhood, which condemned personal property in the most stringent manner, and which through its apparent miraculous cures had obtained many adherents from the better and wealthy classes, also must necessarily have appeared extremely dangerous to the authorities, and justly so! Every calm and clear-headed person must have felt compelled to ask: What is to become of this great community, when the common supply of present means is exhausted? The only point in question was the distribution of the goods and chattels; no one bothered about the work that was necessary to produce them. Only by winning new, and above all, wealthy members, could the brotherhood continue to exist. What else was this but the postponement of an inevitable catastrophe, which must be the more disastrous the greater dimensions the organization had assumed? The intelligent persons among the people recognized this danger very clearly, and since there was no other way, endeavored to put an end to the matter by force, by arresting the Apostles. Religious considerations were certainly not the cause of such procedure. Why, the various sects, such as the Pharisees and the Sadducees, were left unmolested, even though their doctrines were directly opposed to each other. Even the before mentioned community of Essenes were left undisturbed, as their system, radically as it differed in its doctrines and usages from real Judaism, in no way offered any danger to public affairs. But here they had to deal with an aggressive movement,

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<sup>110</sup>Acts iv: 34, 35.

one which seriously threatened the existing order of things, and whose revolutionary character was unmistakable.

The organization had already assumed too large dimensions, to be dissolved without the most energetic measures. It was pretended that the arrested leaders were liberated from jail by "the angel of the Lord," and the captain and his officers who had been sent after them, dared not use violence, "for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned."<sup>111</sup>

Two entirely opposite manifestations of the original Jews and the followers of Christ, were, strange to say, the result of the same psychical phenomenon, that is, delusions of grandeur. In consequence of Abraham's delusions and hallucinations, the Jews considered themselves the "chosen people" whom "the only, eternal God" had selected his people, and, therefore, stood far above any other nation. This delusion of grandeur has persisted during all the ensuing centuries as the popular belief, and to it can be traced the exclusiveness of the Jews and their aversion to mingling with other nations. The delusion of grandeur of Jesus, which made him King of the "Chosen People," increased at such pace that he at first believed himself the Son of God, then God of the "Chosen People," and finally the Lord and God of all the people of heaven and earth. To this delusion of grandeur can be traced the efforts of his followers to spread his doctrine beyond the limits of the Jewish realm, until it found its way over the whole world. So, in these instances, the same delusion of grandeur led to two entirely opposite endeavors.

Originally, Christ had not only a pronounced aversion to strange peoples, but when he came in contact with non-Jews, treated them with scant consideration. When a poor woman from Canaan begged him to cure her sick daughter he showed his contempt for her, and expressly emphasized that he "had been sent" only to the Israelites. He even went so far as to call those who were not Jews, "dogs." Here his delusion of grandeur shows itself by putting his people, the people to which he belongs, so far above all others that

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<sup>111</sup>Acts v: 26.

he feels himself justified in calling all others dogs. Only later on does this delusion increase and make him the God of all nations.

As a result, his apostles at first tried to convert only the Jewish people, and only later "Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."<sup>112</sup>

The organization consisting in the beginning of Jews only, now began to receive members from neighboring nations. The disciples traveled about trying to found new congregations, and to fortify the old ones. It was at Antioch where the adherents of the new doctrine were first called "Christians."<sup>113</sup> Before that they called themselves "Brothers," "Saints," "Apostles," "Believers"; by their opponents they were called "Galileans," "Nazarenes," and "Men of sects." From now on they bore the name "Christians," which has been maintained up to the present day.

The first "Christians" were, therefore, only a sect of the Jews, just like the Pharisees and Sadducees. Not one of the "brothers" expected that by joining the brotherhood he would be called on to give up Judaism. On the contrary, they "were astonished . . . that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."<sup>114</sup> It was just as little the intention of the Apostles to separate themselves from the Jewish religion. On the contrary, they considered that as "Christians" they represented the highest ideal of Judaism.

Religiously, Judaism and Christianity were therefore not opposites, but the whole doctrine of Judaism was contained in that of Christianity. The essence of Judaism, in which it differed from all other religions, was Monotheism. Even though Christianity had added a Son and a Holy Ghost to their "only and eternal God" they had to retain the whole story of the "revelations" of the only God, as otherwise without this "only God" the Son would have fallen too. To save themselves from the dilemma of this contradiction

<sup>112</sup>Acts x: 34, 35.

<sup>113</sup>Acts xi: 26.

<sup>114</sup>Acts x: 45.

they invented the absurd and mystical doctrine of the Trinity, according to which, in spite of the Son and the Holy Ghost, there is only one God, the three added together resulting in only one.

The doctrines of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead, as well as the belief in angels and devils, are found in several sects among the Jews and probably come from the religious views of the Pharisees.

The doctrine of the eternal Kingdom of God on whose throne Christ was to sit henceforth and the keys of whose gate Peter, the brave fisherman, had in charge, is based on the writings of the Prophets, who anticipated the restoration of the mighty old Jewish Kingdom, and called it, according to the theocratic idea of the Jews, the "Kingdom of God," just as the Jews from time immemorial considered themselves God's own people. The word Messiah originally meant only "the anointed" and was used by the Prophets in speaking of the expected hero, who was to stand at the head of this restored kingdom—the anointing of kings being a well-known custom of the Jews of ancient times. That Christ usurped this name, and saw in himself the founder of the Kingdom of God, was due to his para-noïcal condition.

Thus all the religious views of the "Christians" are a product of Judaism, and Christians represent, as has been said, only a sect of the Jewish nation.

The ceremonial, as well as the ritual usages, are also chiefly of Jewish origin. Sprinkling with holy water, particularly as symbolic of the purification from sin, was a custom in vogue among Oriental nations. Among the Jews such ablutions played a great role and can in part be traced back to Moses. Solemn washing, as a symbol of purification, on admission to a Jewish congregation, is a ceremony which, since ancient times, was used with proselytes, and this is, therefore, the custom to which the baptism of Christian proselytes is traceable.

The fact that many Jewish ceremonies have been abandoned, and that, during the course of time, new customs and ceremonies have been adopted by the Christians, is

based on purely practical considerations. In the effort to propagate Christianity, one had to be careful to make the admission of people into the brotherhood as easy as possible. Though Christian communism served the proletariat as bait, it surely was not easy, on the other hand, to persuade the well-to-do to surrender their fortunes. Therefore, to insure the success of the new sect, every unnecessary obstacle that beset the act of joining the brotherhood, had to be removed. Here, for example, we have the dietary laws propounded under the influence of the delusions of Moses. How could it be expected of a strange nation that they would submit to all the nonsensical regulations, such as, for example, not to eat meat and milk (animal and dairy products) together, not to partake of pork, of which they were especially fond?

Circumcision was a ceremonial law of the utmost importance to the Jews, but because of its brutality could not be demanded of proselytes. Even though devout believers were willing to sacrifice their all for the common good, to give up a part of their sexual organ seemed to them just a little too much. So far the enthusiasm of most of them did not reach, and to avoid erecting an insurmountable barrier, this absurd and brutal ceremony had to be abandoned.

As Christ, because of his delusions of grandeur, was convinced of the divinity of his person, as well as of the power and greatness of "his kingdom," and demanded of his adherents, above all things, absolute faith in him and his divine power, so faith in him and salvation through him were the essence of the new doctrine. "Blessed are the faithful" was the motto of the Christian brotherhood. Whatever a person's thoughts and actions might be, he belonged to "sinful" humanity, who could hope for forgiveness and eternal salvation only through implicit belief in him, the "divine savior."

These were the religious views and the social principles of the new sect of the Jews. They formed Christianity in its original state. The greatest possible promulgation of the new doctrine, the conversion of the Jews and Heathen



to the new faith, were among the weightiest points of "Christianity." For Christ himself had ordered that his name be spread throughout the world, for he had taken the sins of mankind upon himself and had shed his blood for the salvation of all peoples. From that time on when Christ's disciples traveled from place to place, proclaiming the doctrine of their Master, until today, when Christian missionaries try to make proselytes in India and China, the effort to spread Christianity has never ceased.

The eagerness, the zeal with which Christ's disciples traveled about, endeavoring to teach the new doctrine and found new congregations, is certainly remarkable, and was crowned with no little success. Nevertheless, people of the type of our friend Peter would never have succeeded in carrying the new doctrine far beyond the borders of the Jewish kingdom. In spite of the propitious conditions, which offered themselves for the adoption of a new, sensational philosophy of life, those simple fishermen would never have succeeded in introducing Christianity into the civilized world of that time. For the accomplishment of this great task an unusual personality, a fanaticism, such as is rarely given to ordinary mortals, was required. It needed a personality which understood how to fascinate, how to bewitch the people, a personality endowed with almost superhuman power, able to exercise over the masses an influence like that of the "Messiah" himself, whose power and glory he had come to proclaim. Such a man appeared at the right moment in the person of Paul. Without him, the Christians as a sect would undoubtedly have disappeared as so many other sects did before—and since. His personality and what he accomplished will form the contents of the next chapter.

#### ST. PAUL.

Just as the personality of Christ forms the chief object of Christianity, so Paul was the actual founder of it. Not only was the propagation of the new doctrine his work, but for the most part the new doctrine itself can be traced back to Paul. It was he, not Christ, who did away

with the old Jewish traditions and ceremonies, such as the dietary laws of Moses, and above all, circumcision. Paul founded the many Christian congregations and gave them their administrative organization (every congregation had a Presbytery to whom the deacon was subservient). It was Paul who gave to the newly founded congregations their moral precepts, which not infrequently were in direct contradiction to the utterances of Christ. The essence of his doctrine was formed by the belief in Christ "the Son of God." By means of this faith, the sins of man were to be forgiven. Like Christ himself, those who believe in him will be resurrected and will enjoy salvation in the eternal Kingdom of Christ.

You must recall the conditions existing at that time; you must think of the great difficulty of traveling; you must picture to yourself the crude superstition of the lower and the philosophical scepticism of the educated classes in Greece and Italy, to form an idea of the almost superhuman task Paul had set himself, and which nevertheless he carried out with brilliant result. He undertook three great journeys through the civilized world of that time. From the capital of one of the most easterly Roman provinces, he pushed his way to the westerly end of the world, almost into Spain; everywhere proclaiming "the word of Christ" and founding new congregations. He devoted his whole life to this task, to the conversion of Jews and Heathens. The greater the difficulties that arose in his path, the more burning grew his zeal. He feared neither hunger nor thirst, neither heat nor cold. No physical effort was too much for his rather weak body, none of the snares of his opponents served to discourage his zealous spirit. Bravely and courageously he strode towards the goal that appeared before him, and to attain to which he believed himself ordained by a higher power.

The life and work of this unusual man is too generally known to be recounted here in detail. Anyone who cares to inform himself more thoroughly on these points, is referred to that part of the New Testament concerning him,<sup>115</sup>

<sup>115</sup>Acts and Epistles of St. Paul.

as well as to the many biographies written of him. For our purpose it suffices to emphasize those points which are particularly characteristic of Paul's personality, or which need a special scientific explanation.

Though Paul had learned a trade, that of making tents<sup>116</sup> he had, nevertheless, enjoyed a scientific education, according to the views of that time. It was a general custom among the Jews to let their sons learn a trade, whether they were obliged to pursue it professionally or not. "He," says Rabbi Judah, "who does not teach his son a trade, does the same as though he taught him to be a thief." From his earliest youth, he was instructed in the Holy Scriptures, in the history of his people, and in religious laws. "At the feet of Gamaliel,"<sup>117</sup> the famous Rabbi, he studied the theological doctrines of his Master. He spoke Greek as fluently as Hebrew. Like his father, in riper years he joined the Pharisees, "the strictest sect"<sup>118</sup> of the Jews.

He appears on the stage of the world for the first time when the unbridled rabble is stoning Stephen to death. When this unfortunate youth had made his last address to the people, at the end of which he reminded them of the persecution and death of the Prophets, by their fathers, and accused them of the murder of the Messiah announced by the Prophets, the masses fell on him in blind wrath, amidst the wildest shrieks, drove him out of the city, and stoned him to death. One of the worst of this infuriated rabble was Paul, or as he called himself at that time, Saul. At a general persecution of the new congregation, which took place as a sequel to this event, Paul raged among these poor people with the utmost brutality and with extreme cruelty. Not even women and children were safe before his wrath. With "threatenings and slaughter," he forced his way into homes, and dragged all he could lay hands on, irrespective of age or sex, without mercy to prison. Not satisfied with this, he asked the High-Priest for letters of introduction to the Synagogues in Damascus, with the intention of dragging men and women who were ready to profess the new faith, bound and in chains, to Jerusalem.

<sup>116</sup>Acts xviii: 3.<sup>117</sup>Acts xxii: 3.<sup>118</sup>Acts xxvi: 5.

**But** when, supplied with the necessary letters, he found himself on the road, the following occurrence overtook him before he reached Damascus: "And suddenly there shined round about him a light from Heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? and the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."<sup>119</sup> Seized with fear, he arose from the ground, but when he opened his eyes, it was dark around him; he had been struck with blindness. Instead, as he had planned, of arriving in Damascus like a victor, ready to force his way into the homes of the people and make prisoners of men, women, and children to be dragged to Jerusalem, he crept, like a prisoner, through the gate into the city, led by the hand by those who accompanied him. For three days, during which he neither ate nor drank, he remained blind. Then a disciple, called Ananias, "sent by the Lord," appeared before him, and laid his hands on Paul so that his sight might be restored and he "be filled with the Holy Ghost." "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith."<sup>120</sup> Only after he had been baptized did he again partake of food to strengthen his body, which had been very much weakened by his three days' fast. After a few days of convalescence he began to preach in the synagogues and to proclaim Christ as the Son of God. The same doctrine which in Jerusalem he had persecuted with fanatical zeal and inhuman cruelty and for the complete extermination of which he has asked the High Priest for letters of introduction to Damascus whither he journeyed—this same doctrine he now proclaimed with the same fanatical eagerness, and made it his life's task to spread it throughout the world. But before he began the great work of conversion, even before he entered into direct communication with

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<sup>119</sup>Acts ix: 3-6.<sup>120</sup>Acts ix: 17, 18.

the highest leaders of the new sect, he disappeared for a time from the eyes of the public, and lived in complete seclusion in Arabia.<sup>121</sup> Only after three years did he come from Damascus to Jerusalem, when for the first time he met the Apostles. After a short stay in this place he went to Cæsarea, and from there to Tarsus, his birthplace.

From Antioch Paul, together with Barnabas and accompanied by John, undertook his first missionary journey. He had been "informed" by the Holy Ghost that he had been "appointed" to perform this work, and in all important decisions it is always the Holy Ghost, or Christ himself, who gives his commands to Paul. He made three great journeys through Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, and Spain, and in doing so evinced an energy which is simply marvelous. In all the cities he visited, he preached in the synagogues and to the heathen part of the populace. Everywhere he "converted" numerous Jews and "Heathens," making them join to form Christian congregations. The essence of his doctrine lay in the glorification of Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of all mankind who believed in him, and in the resurrection after death to an eternal life in another world. Like Christ, Paul won the people by his "miracles," foremost among which was healing the sick. Having abolished the old Jewish ceremonies and customs in the newly founded congregation, a bitter enmity against him naturally arose among the orthodox Jews, who held the Mosaic laws, handed down to them from generation to generation, their most sacred possession, and to whose hearts the religion, inherited from their fathers, was unspeakably precious. As he spoke everywhere of the "kingdom of Christ" and, as Christ himself had done frequently, called him a "king," it was not difficult to accuse him of political intrigues. According to Roman law, he appealed directly to the Emperor, and therefore was sent as prisoner to Rome. There, brought before the court of justice, he was set free so that he was able to carry on his missionary work for some time longer. But before long he was again

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<sup>121</sup>Gal. i: 17.

accused. This time the judgment of the court was not so favorable as before, he was sentenced to death and was beheaded in Rome.

Paul was an extraordinary character. His life was so full of mystical and marvelous occurrences, that to the present day he ranks next to Christ as the principal subject of philosophical and theological discussion. Without Paul, the new doctrine would never have conquered the world, and in him we must recognize the actual founder of Christianity. As Christ was believed to be the embodied Deity, so Paul was said to be the instrument of God, by which to spread his name and his commands throughout the world. Christ lent his "apostle" power and strength to perform miracles and to overcome, with superhuman endurance, all obstacles placed in his path.

Anyone filled with the same naïve faith which has possessed mankind for the last two thousand years, needs no further explanation of all those occurrences. To him, that apostolic age, so rich in "miracles," has nothing more miraculous than the phenomenon of the "Savior" himself. If once one begins to believe in a divine omnipotence, in a divine power, which, at pleasure, interferes with the destinies of men, there are no limits to the realm of miracles. "Everything is possible with God."

But for those who, on the contrary, stand on the sceptical ground of modern natural science, there are no "miracles." They feel the urgent need to explain, scientifically, all the phenomena of nature, as well as in the history of man. Like the phenomenon of Christ, the personality of Paul can be reconciled to our modern scientific views in only one way. Like Christ, Paul, too, was a paranoiac.

The diagnosis of a mental disease, and particularly that of paranoia, must never rest on one single symptom. The entire psychical manifestations of the individual must be analyzed, and in doing so as large a portion of his life as possible should be brought under consideration. We will, therefore, consider the life of Paul from the purely psychi-

atrical viewpoint, as far as historical reports about him permit.

One trait which shows itself in his every act and which strikes us at the very beginning of his appearance, is the enormous fanaticism with which he tries to carry out his ideas. The intensity in one's actions, even if it approaches fanaticism, is not necessarily a symptom of disease. This psychical faculty is not infrequently found in great men who have made a discovery or an invention in the acceptance of which they have met with the strong opposition of their contemporaries. Ingenious artists who have branched out in new paths of art, are often forced by obstacles and opposition to a perfect fanaticism without which they never would have reached their goal. On the other hand, it is a well-known fact that actions that are the result of delusions, are most intense, and not seldom bear the character of fanaticism, so that persistent fanatics arouse at least the suspicion of being psychical anomalies.

Let us try to trace the fanaticism of Paul back to its psychological cause.

We meet him for the first time at the murder of Stephen. Yes, murder! Of a legal death-sentence, as in the case of Christ, there can be no question, for, according to the Roman law, the Jews had no right to inflict the death-penalty, without the sanction of the procurator. But even the High-Priest before whom Stephen had been accused by the people had no share in his death. It was the mob, which hurled itself upon him, drove him out of the city, and then stoned him to death. The whole occurrence could well be compared to the lynchings which, unfortunately, occasionally take place today in some parts of the United States. One of the chief actors in this abominable crime was Paul. It is expressly stated that he was pleased with this murder.

If the rabble takes pleasure in murdering and burning its fellowmen, if it rejoices in their torture and agonies, we find it exceedingly deplorable, but are not astonished, as history proves that the rabble has always been so and will probably remain so for a long time to come. But if a man,

with the mental capability of a Paul, joins the rabble, if a person who has sat at the feet of Gamaliel and imbibed scientific instruction becomes the leader in a murderous tumult, there must be some extraordinary reason for such an action. Paul was not satisfied with this one murder. Like the lion, who has once tasted blood, his murderous lust knew no limits. "Breathing out threatenings and slaughter," he forced his way into the homes "and dragged out men and women, and threw them into prison." Innocent persons who had done him, personally, no harm, whom he, probably, did not even know, people whose supposed crime was only that they believed in the divinity of Christ, were dragged by him from their peaceful homes, either to be killed or to be imprisoned. How can such actions, perpetrated by an educated, nay, a scientifically educated man, be explained? But even with all this, he was not content. He did not confine his lust for murder to Jerusalem. His bloodthirsty glance fell on other cities of Judea, where he likewise persecuted and punished the Christians, and helped "to put them to death."<sup>122</sup> In order to have a pretext for putting these helpless people to death he "compelled them to blaspheme." Holding no official position, he had the Chief-Priest invest him with authority and commission, in consequence of which he was enabled to imprison people.<sup>123</sup> Finally, equipped with letters from the High-Priest, he went to Damascus "that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."<sup>124</sup>

How can such brutal conduct on the part of a scientifically educated man be explained? How can a psychological explanation be found for such frightful fanaticism in a person whom history glorifies as one of the world's greatest heroes?

Paul had been by no means the only one to offer a strong opposition to the Christian doctrine; the educated class of the Jews could under no circumstances worship an insane carpenter as a God. But it was only the mob, which on the one hand formed the essential part of the

<sup>122</sup>Acts xxvi: 10.<sup>123</sup>Acts xxvi: 110.<sup>124</sup>Acts ix: 2.



new congregation, and on the other raged against the same in public demonstrations and actual assaults. No one had asked Paul to take part in the attack on the Christian congregations. He occupied no official position which justified him in interposing against the deniers of the orthodox religion. Unasked, of his own free will, he helped to murder his fellowmen and drag them into prison.

Such fanaticism is hardly to be explained by religious faith alone. In the course of centuries, innumerable crimes have been committed in the name of religion, but the circumstances were always different from those in the case of Paul. If, for example, we take the persecution of the Jews, of which history gives so many instances, we find that it was, as a rule, only the mob which reveled in such practices: If, as was recently the case in Russia, such crimes are not only permitted but even secretly approved by those in authority, political motives are always found to be at the bottom of them. The Jews belonged to the liberal party, the party opposed to the Government. But we find nothing like this in Paul's case. His fanaticism is of a very peculiar order.

If we knew nothing else of Paul except this fanatical persecution of the early Christian congregations, his "threatenings and slaughter," these brutal attacks on defenseless men and women, we could not, from this conduct alone, make a psychiatric diagnosis of his mental condition. But we would be justified in saying that in view of these peculiar circumstances, there was a strong suspicion that Paul's actions were governed by delusions. At any rate, the assumption of a systematized structure of delusions would fully explain his extraordinary conduct, while no other satisfactory explanation can be found for his fanatical murders.

The most momentous occurrence in Paul's life, at the same time constituting one of the most important factors for a scientific judgment concerning his mental condition, are the events which led to his sudden conversion to Christianity.

On the way to Damascus, the letters of the High-Priest

in his pocket, "he was suddenly surrounded by light from heaven. And he fell to the ground, and heard a voice which said to him . . ." This occurrence is described in three different places in the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>125</sup>

They all agree that Paul suddenly became aware of a powerful light, that fright caused him to fall to the ground, and that then a voice which claimed to be that of Jesus himself, spoke to him. The versions given by those who accompanied him differ in a few essential points. In one place we find that his companions stood petrified; in another, that they all fell to the ground. In one version we are told that they heard a voice, but saw no one; in another, that they saw a light, but heard nothing. But on one point, and that is the essential one, the versions all agree, that not one of his escorts either heard a speaking voice or saw a person. To them the occurrence was obviously a sudden phenomenon of Nature, either a strong light-effect or a loud noise, such as might be produced by an explosion, or both. An unusually violent flash of lightning with its accompanying crash of thunder, would fully explain the phenomenon in so far as the companions perceived it. But Paul heard a voice, speaking to him in Hebrew, so that the following dialogue unfolded itself: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."<sup>126</sup>

In the course of centuries, thousands of commentaries have been written on this particular passage in the Bible. The most learned theologians have perplexed their brains

<sup>125</sup>ix, xxii, xxvi.

<sup>126</sup>Acts xxvi: 14-18.

about whether Jesus permitted Paul only to hear his voice or appeared to him in person ; whether in fact it was Jesus himself who appeared to Paul, or whether he sent his angel to him, as God had done frequently in the Old Testament. But the greatest miracle of all was the fact that only Paul heard the words of Jesus, he, for whom they were intended, while his companions heard only an empty sound.

Anyone who still believes in the divinity of Jesus and considers it possible that after his death he could "appear" and speak to anyone, needs no further explanation. He who thinks logically, instead of "believing," who is free from the obsolete nonsense of religious superstition, requires a scientific explanation of phenomena like this.

For us there can be not the slightest doubt that Paul had an hallucination when he believed that he heard the voice of Jesus. There are various kinds of hallucinations. When we have a perception of an occurrence such as the appearance of a person, or the sound of a voice, without any external stimulus to produce the perception, we speak of a true hallucination. But if an external stimulus, such, for instance, as the rumble of thunder, is falsely interpreted, so that the person believes that he hears a human or divine voice instead of the thunder, we call it an illusion. It is the latter condition with which we are dealing here. Obviously, some sudden phenomenon of nature, such as an unusually severe thunder-storm, or a volcanic eruption, startled the travelers. Paul's companions perceived nothing but the light and the sound. But in his own brain these impressions were transformed in a pathological way. The emotion which was aroused in him was so intense that, trembling, he fell to the earth. Thereupon he heard the voice of Jesus, and the foregoing dialogue took place.

Hallucinations of this and similar kind are never, as you may suppose, the cause of the delusions relative to them, but represent, so to say, the realization of former ideas. Applied to the present case, this means: Paul was not led to believe in Christ by the hallucinations which appeared to him as the words of Christ, but this supposed address of Christ was the realization of previously formed delusions.

Paul's psychical processes up to the time of the "appearance of Christ" we must picture to ourselves somewhat as follows: The dominating center of all his thoughts was made up of religious ideas. Paul suffered from a condition which we today would call religious mania. The differentiation between a normal religious belief and religious insanity is not always easy, since both have a common essential factor. While every normal idea is developed from sense-perceptions and logical conclusions, faith, as well as delusions, originates *a priori* in the brain. Both lack the firm foundation of logical cognition. It would take us too far, were we to discuss in detail the differentiation between insanity and faith. There is an extensive literature on this subject, to which we must refer the reader who desires further information on this question. The experienced psychiatrist will, as a rule, be able to decide easily whether a person is filled with religious enthusiasm or is suffering from religious delusions. The latter are usually connected with actions which bear the stamp of disease. Delusions always dominate over all other ideas, as the result of which we find those intense and impulsive actions which are so characteristic of this mental process.

Paul obviously had the delusion that he was appointed by God to guard the religious faith of the Jews. All those who broke any of the laws handed down by their fathers he looked upon as enemies of God, and their punishment was a duty imposed upon him by the Lord. It is impossible to state with certainty just how old he was when he first became possessed of this delusion. We know that at the time of the stoning of Stephen, he was a "young man"<sup>127</sup> and that therefore the first delusions must have arisen at a very early age, which is in perfect accord with the corresponding pathological picture. The appearance of Christ must have made an enormous impression upon him. Although only a few years younger than Christ, he had never seen him, having spent his youth in Tarsus. His father being an educated man (he, too, belonged to the Pharisees),<sup>128</sup> and he himself having enjoyed a scientific educa-

<sup>127</sup>Acts vii: 58.

<sup>128</sup>xxiii: 6.

tion, he grew up in circles in which the carpenter's son, who announced himself as the Son of God, was at first laughed at, but later on, when his demagogical influence over the people began to be feared, was strongly antagonized. Remarks and considerations of this kind must have been made continually in the presence of young Paul. Christ and his adherents undoubtedly were the main topics of conversation, at home, as well as in public. The delusions which were developing in the growing lad received their chief material from this circumstance.

When the lad finally went to Jerusalem and became acquainted with the ground where the man, of whom he had heard so much, had lived and worked, when he saw the cross on which he whom his adherents worshiped as the Son of God had breathed his last, when, with his own ears, he heard how the "believers" acknowledged in him the Messiah whom the Prophets had announced to the Jewish people—the smoldering fire of his delusions burst into flames. To prosecute and punish the blasphemers of God he deemed his most sacred duty. He wanted neither to wait nor rest until he himself had extirpated all the blasphemers who had so bitterly offended the faith of their fathers.

His delusions which drove him to these impulsive actions, had, until then, experienced no psychical realization. Hallucinations had not appeared up to this time. This is proven by his own account of his past. But this very fact, the absence of hallucinations, awoke in him certain doubts. As a result of his delusions of grandeur he considered himself the chosen one, ordained to protect the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" against blasphemy, to guard the religion of the Fathers against the attacks of enemies. But why, he asked himself, did not God reveal himself to him as he had done to the Prophets? Why had not God spoken to him and given him direct commands and instructions? Had he, the chosen one, perhaps made a mistake? No! Impossible! For if Jesus were really of divine origin, if Jesus were the Messiah announced by the Prophets, he would certainly have revealed himself to him; he would

have appeared to him long ago, and would have made him, the chosen one, his chief apostle.

This is the chain of thoughts which took place in the diseased brain of Paul, when he with his companions found himself on the way to Damascus. Again and again these thoughts went around in his head. Now, the purpose of his journey, to drag men and women, bound, to Jerusalem to have them punished for blasphemy, recurred to him; then again he thought of the great responsibility he had taken upon himself by his enterprise. Doubt and uncertainty may have overcome him, and in fearsome expectation he looked to heaven, hoping for a sign from God who had ordained him to perform great deeds.

Then it was that the crash of thunder was heard and "a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun," surrounded him and those who traveled with him.<sup>129</sup> Overwhelmed with fear he fell to earth. Every fiber of his brain vibrated in the greatest excitement. His senses left him, and in a sort of feverish delirium he hears, instead of thunder, the voice of Christ, which announced to him that he has been chosen to convert the nations of the earth "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."<sup>130</sup>

This is approximately the manner in which the pathological process in the brain of Paul gradually developed, until the accidental phenomenon of Nature, whatever its character may have been, gave the impetus to the psychical realization of the heretofore vague delusions, thereby placing them on an assured basis. The hallucination was the result of his previous delusions. On the other hand, the delusions, through their psychical realization, gained markedly in strength and clearness, and now became the starting point for all of his future thoughts and actions.

We are far from making the diagnosis of a mental disease from the account of a single hallucination. It is true that actual hallucinations, in the psychiatric sense, do not occur in mentally normal persons. But where we have to deal with the historical description of an isolated hallucina-

<sup>129</sup>Acts xxvi: 13.

<sup>130</sup>Acts xxvi: 18.

tion, so many other explanations are possible, such as dreams, hysterical manifestations, falsehoods, deceptions, we must be exceedingly careful, and even then accept a hallucination as such only if the entire picture of the individual can be brought into accord with it. So, for example, Peter, too, had a "vision" in connection with a conversation with the voice of "the Lord." Obviously, the Apostles had occupied themselves considerably with the question as to how far they could go in forcing the "heathen" who had been converted to Christianity to accept Jewish customs, particularly the dietary laws. One day, Peter went on the housetop to pray, and being hungry, he had a meal prepared. While this was being done, "he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth; wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call thou not common. This was done thrice; and the vessel was received up again into heaven."<sup>181</sup>

These two phenomena, the hallucination of Paul and the "trance" of Peter, are, considered by themselves, similar manifestations. Nevertheless, this is not so. The psychical mechanism at the bottom of these two phenomena is totally different. Paul's entire attitude goes to prove, as we will see, the existence of actual hallucinations, while our good Peter is by no means insane. He is the typical easily-influenced and good-natured fisherman, who can be made to believe anything, who is proud of the honor shown him when Jesus selects him to guard the keys of the gate of heaven, and who patiently waits "according to his promise, for new heavens and a new earth."<sup>182</sup> In Peter's whole life as we know it from the Gospel, the history of the Apostles, and his own letters, there is nothing which would

<sup>181</sup>Acts x: 10-16.

<sup>182</sup>2 Peter iii: 13.

justify us in assuming a mental disease of any sort, and we will, consequently, have to find another explanation for this "trance."

It certainly requires no great power of imagination to picture to one's self that the good fisherman, having sat down comfortably "at the sixth hour," on the housetop, to say his prayers, took a little nap and that the "great sheet knit at the four corners," filled with "wild beasts, and creeping things" appeared to him in a dream. Indeed, such a dream fits much better into the frame of the fisherman's mental make-up than would an hallucination in the psychiatric sense.

But the conditions in Paul's case are entirely different. As we shall see, this was by no means the only hallucination that took place in his brain. On the contrary, his entire mode of thinking and acting rests on delusions and hallucinations, so that the before-mentioned hallucination is in complete accord with his other psychical states.

When, trembling and hesitating with fright, he arose from the ground, "he saw no one— . . . and was three days without sight." There is no eye-disease which produces a three-days blindness. But there are frequent occurrences of such blindness in mental diseases, particularly in hysteria and other psychoses. In the Bible such cases of blindness are comparatively frequent, and they must have played a noticeable role at that time. The man whom Christ cured of blindness by smearing earth and saliva mixed together in his eyes, belongs in the same category. Likewise all other blindnesses which were cured by miracles. Such blindness, which occurs nowadays just the same, is not due to a disturbance in the organ of sight, but to delusions. The patient has the delusion that he is blind, and, consequently, can not see. Therefore this symptom can be removed by psychical influences only. What the nature of the suggestion to effect a cure in each individual case must be, whether earth and saliva smeared into the eyes by the "Messiah" or other emotional influences, is immaterial, so long as the suggestion is sufficiently intense. That persons were struck with blindness as a punishment



was a widespread belief in olden times. Paul himself punishes a "magician" by inflicting blindness upon him. Obviously, such ideas combined with the doubts that arose in him, absorbed his thoughts. Was he really on the wrong road? Had he unjustly murdered those many men and women? Was he, whose adherents he so zealously persecuted, perhaps, after all, the Son of God? Then his just punishment was inevitable. God would punish him with blindness and abandon him to his fate. He was filled with such thoughts, when, amidst thunder and lightning, Jesus appeared to him.

The loss of sight is, therefore, in complete accord with the remaining psychical manifestations. In like manner, the fact that he neither ate nor drank during three days. Either he had been commanded by Jesus in another hallucination to abstain from all nourishment, or he inflicted this punishment on himself in expiation of the great wrong he had done the Redeemer.

As a matter of course, the delusions of grandeur were soon to supersede these self-accusations. Immediately after the lapse of three days a disciple, called Ananias, appeared to him, "sent by the Lord," and laid his hands upon him, so that he "might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost." That this was another hallucination, through which the blindness was cured, probably needs no further assurance. "There fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith."

That a person may change his mind or that anyone should be "converted" from one religious faith to another, is certainly nothing unusual. Nobody would ever dream of considering this a psychical anomaly. But, as a rule, changes of opinion or faith take place slowly and gradually. Such a change must have a motive. The person must know why he gives up the views he has entertained and adopts the opposite ones. But how does this change take place in Paul? After raging with threats and murder against the new congregations, after having decided to go to Damascus, solely for the purpose of dragging the men and women of the new faith, bound in chains, to Jeru-

saalem, he is, on the road there, suddenly torn from one extreme to the other; without any apparent motive he becomes the most ardent adherent of those whom he but now wanted to murder because of their faith. Such behavior is irreconcilable with mental soundness, and can be explained only by the assumption of delusions.

No sane person, imagining himself in the situation in which Paul found himself at that time, in Damascus, could possibly be in doubt as to what he would at once have done. After persecuting the followers of the new doctrine, Paul feels himself called upon to spread this doctrine throughout the world. What, above all other things, is necessary for the carrying out of this enterprise? What would a normal person do in such a situation? Unquestionably, he would at once strive to ally himself with the leaders of this brotherhood. Paul had never seen Christ, nor had his doctrines or those of his Apostles ever been confided to him. For the purpose of informing himself on these matters, as well as to act in common with them, this seems to have been an absolute necessity.

But what did Paul do after, according to his opinion, he had been ordained by Christ to open the eyes of the heathen and to spread the faith in him throughout the world? He retires for nearly three years to the Arabian desert. Not a word is heard about his doings during this period of time. He simply disappeared. We have, here, a remarkable similarity between his conduct and that of four men in the Bible, Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist, and Christ, who were all of them paranoiacs, too. All of them, immediately before a new epoch in their lives, withdrew for some time into seclusion. There they held communion with God who had chosen them to perform great deeds. Christ received his doctrines and instructions from "his Father in Heaven" at whose right hand he was to sit, on the throne of the eternal kingdom. This was the period during which the delusions systematized themselves. The content of these continual hallucinations was based wholly on his intercourse with God.

Paul doubtless received his doctrines and instructions

in the same way, from Christ, during the long time he spent in the Arabian desert. On every occasion he boasts that God had chosen him, to reveal his Son through him, and that he had received his doctrine not from man, "but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."<sup>133</sup> He expressly emphasizes that he had "conferred not with flesh and blood," and that at that time he purposely refrained from going to the Apostles in Jerusalem.<sup>134</sup> Herein lies an unmistakable sign of delusion of grandeur. He speaks, in a genuinely paranoïcal manner, of God, "who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen."<sup>135</sup> A further symptom of his delusions of grandeur is his arbitrary usurpation of the title "apostle." This title was confined exclusively to the twelve men whom Christ himself selected to be his companions and pupils. The only one who later on legitimately received this title, was Matthew, who took the place of Judas.<sup>136</sup> After Paul had given himself this title, St. Luke called not only him by this name, but also Barnabas, since he was his companion. Paul calls himself "Apostle" because, according to his delusions, he is fully convinced that, like all the twelve Apostles, he was appointed to this position by Christ. Quite characteristic, in this respect, are the headings of his letters which he always begins something in this fashion: "Paul, ordained by the will of God to be the Apostle of Jesus Christ." His letter to the Galatians he begins even as follows: "Paul, an Apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.") These continual assurances that Christ had personally made him his Apostle, although, in fact, he had never seen him, form unmistakable evidence of delusions and hallucinations governing all his thoughts and actions.

In the meager reports, given in the history of the Apostles concerning his life, we naturally find only the most important facts, and therefore can not expect to find a record of all the hallucinations from which Paul suffered during his long life. To do this it would certainly require many

<sup>133</sup>Gal. i: 12.<sup>134</sup>Gal. i: 16, 17.<sup>135</sup>Gal. i: 15, 16.<sup>136</sup>Acts i: 26.

books; nevertheless, in this short account there are mentioned comparatively so many hallucinations, that there can be no doubt that they existed continually. In every important decision, in every enterprise, it is always "the Holy Ghost" who commissions him to do this or that. He is always "sent" by a supposed authority—though not that of men. It is never he himself who acts, but the Deity who uses him as an instrument.

The beginning of his first journey is described as follows: "As they ministered to the Lord, and feasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."<sup>137</sup> What else is this speaking Holy Ghost than a hallucination? Immediately following this we find: "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost...." In this manner everything is done at the command of the Holy Ghost. When, after an absence of fourteen years, he returns to the Apostles in Jerusalem, he "went up by revelation."<sup>138</sup> When he went through Phrygia and Galatia, they "were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not."<sup>139</sup>

It was an important decision on the part of Paul to leave Asia Minor and journey through Macedonia and Greece. This decision, too, is based on an hallucination. "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, come over into Macedonia, and help us."<sup>140</sup> In consequence of this "vision" he at once went to Macedonia.

When Paul, put under accusation, defended himself before the people, he told the story of his conversion, how Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and so forth. When, later on, he went to Jerusalem and prayed in the temple it happened that "I was in a trance, and saw him saying unto me, Make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned

<sup>137</sup>Acts xiii: 2.<sup>138</sup>Gal. ii: 2.<sup>139</sup>Acts xvi: 6, 7.<sup>140</sup>Acts xvi: 9.

and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart, for I will send thee far from hence unto the Gentiles."<sup>141</sup> As has been said, hallucinations are always the consequence of pre-existing thoughts. His continual assurances that he was appointed an Apostle by Christ himself, that the Deity revealed himself to him alone, must obviously have engendered in him the feeling that he boasted too much of this great honor, and that he could be punished for this vanity and self-glorification. As a consequence he had the following hallucination: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."<sup>142</sup>

All his sermons in the Jewish temples as well as to the "heathen" were delivered at the instance of "the Holy Ghost," whose voice he believed he heard continually. "And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ."<sup>143</sup> Shortly after this "the Lord" himself spoke to him, saying: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace. For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city."<sup>144</sup>

His first idea, to go to Rome, there to proclaim the name of Jesus, is expressed in an hallucination of this sort: "The Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: For as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."<sup>145</sup>

Very characteristic of his delusions and hallucinations is his conduct during the disastrous trip from Crete to the Island of Melita. He acts as though he understands naviga-

<sup>141</sup>Acts xxii: 17-21.<sup>142</sup>Cor. xii: 7-9.<sup>143</sup>Acts xviii: 5.<sup>144</sup>Acts xviii: 9, 10.<sup>145</sup>Acts xxiii: 11.

tion better than the trained seamen on board. He gives orders, reproaches the sailors for not having obeyed his instructions, and conducts himself as though he were the commander of the ship. Here is an example of his attitude: "But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you. but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."<sup>146</sup>

Since various remarks of Christ had given rise to the notion of regarding patient suffering as a great virtue, Paul applies his delusions of grandeur even to the troubles and persecutions he endured. In his letters he speaks of these things with genuine satisfaction, so that, in his case, one might speak of a delusion of grandeur of endurance. Here is a proof of this: "Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold (I speak foolishly), I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? . . . I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides these things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."<sup>147</sup> Who but a para-

<sup>146</sup>Acts xxvii: 21-25.

noia could write so naïve a self-glorification in a letter, which was addressed by the "first Apostle" of Christ to a Christian congregation in Corinth? And at the same time he protests continually that he does not wish to praise himself. "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities."<sup>148</sup> Even through the very assurance of his "infirmities," his delusions of grandeur become manifest. "Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong."<sup>149</sup> It is quite characteristic of his mental condition that all his thoughts concentrate on one point, the exaltation of his "Ego." It matters not of what he speaks, he always comes back to himself, to his person, to his importance and greatness. Even the weakness of which he boasts leads him to the conclusion: "For when I am weak, then am I strong." Obviously, the sentence so often spoken by Christ hovers before his mind: "The last shall be first." He calls himself the last, the weak, etc., because thereby he will be the first and the strong.

In this sense he says, in another passage: "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."<sup>150</sup> But he is very far from really considering himself the "least of the apostles" or from believing that he is "unworthy" of the title, which he conferred upon himself. This expression is nothing but a paranoïcal manner of proclaiming his own greatness. For immediately thereafter he also says: "But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, for I labored more abundantly than they all."<sup>151</sup> In another place he says: "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."<sup>152</sup>

One occurrence in the life of Paul, which has occupied

<sup>1472</sup> Cor. xi: 21-28

<sup>1482</sup> Cor. xi: 30.

<sup>1492</sup> Cor. xii: 10.

<sup>1501</sup> Cor. xv: 9.

<sup>1511</sup> Cor. xv: 10.

<sup>152</sup> Phil. iv: 123.

the learned world ever since his time and about which the most varying theories have been advanced, is the change of his name from Saul to Paul. St. Luke, in his history of the Apostles, calls him Saul up to that time when he converts the Proconsul Sergius Paulus to the belief in Christ. From then on he calls him Paul, so that it is often and justifiably assumed that the change of name was connected with this event.

When Paul and Barnabas journeyed through the Island of Cypress they came to the city of Paphos, where the Proconsul Sergius Paulus was living. This was a man who, in conformity with his time, was prone to every possible superstition. It seems that great generals and officials of state of the Roman Empire were particularly wrapped up in various superstitions. Marius kept a Syrian fortune-teller in his camp whose divinations are said to have exercised great influence on the decisions of the general. Brutus visited the Delphic oracle, to seek advice there. Pompey, Crassus, and Julius Cæsar had their astrologers, whose prophecies they trusted.

The main source of the superstition that over-flooded the Roman Empire, was that country of mysticism, the cradle of the original doctrine of the Gods, the Orient. From all parts of Asia Minor came fortune-tellers and sorcerers, until they had spread throughout the Roman Empire. Among them were not a few Israelites, so that it is not at all strange that a man like Sergius Paulus kept a Jewish fortune-teller.

The arrival of two men like Paul and Barnabas must naturally have aroused great comment in a remote place like the city of Paphos. The "miracles" they performed as well as the new doctrine they proclaimed—that of the resurrection of the dead and the eternal kingdom of Christ—must inevitably have greatly interested a man like Sergius Paulus, who was, anyway, inclined to mysticism. He, therefore, sent for the two Israelites, so that they might make known to him their doctrines. But when Elymas, the Jewish fortune-teller, opposed the things that Paul recited, "Saul (who also is called Paul), filled with the Holy



Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O, full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of God. And now, behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness."<sup>153</sup>

Just imagine this scene, which, if it could be reproduced today, would be altogether too comical. On the one side a paranoiac who, convinced of his power and strength, tries to crush every one who opposes him. Like Jupiter hurling his lightning, so this "Apostle of the Lord" hurls the penalty of blindness on that "child of the devil" who stands trembling and hesitating before him. What kind of an individual this Jewish "sorcerer Elmyas" was, we can not determine today, for there are no reports extant about him except these few words. But the very fact that the curse of the "Apostle" did rob him of his sight, shows convincingly that he must have been a degenerate, hysterical, individual, for nothing but hysterical blindness can have been in question. This scene, which took place before Proconsul Sergius Paulus, was bound to make an enormous impression on him, filled, as he was, with superstition and with not too keen mental ability. There was no obvious reason why he should not accept one superstition as well as another, and since Paul demonstrated his divine power, he allowed himself to be converted to Christianity without further difficulty.

What the battle of Philippi was to Augustus, what the battle of Marengo meant to Napoleon, this first moral victory over a Roman dignitary, the Proconsul of a Roman province, was to Paul. The "conversion" of so high and influential a personality must have appeared the more important to the "apostle," since before then it had generally been the lower classes who had adopted the new faith. This conversion opened the way to a long line of victories which Paul saw stretching out before him.

From this time on, the "apostle" called himself Paul;

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<sup>153</sup>Acts xiii: 9-11.

up to this time his name had been Saul. There are a great many theories concerning this duality of names. Many claim that besides his Jewish name, Saul also had received a Roman surname from his parents, and that he had carried both names from childhood. What is most probably true is that he adopted the name Paul in the same way that he gave himself the title "apostle." He was aware of the fact that Roman generals for important victories over new provinces which they annexed to the Roman Empire, received a surname corresponding to that of the conquered territory; as for example, Scipio Africanus, of Germanicus, Britannicus, *et al.* In this way he gave himself the name of Paulus, as a reward for converting the Proconsul Sergius Paulus. This theory corresponds to facts as well as to the mental condition of the "apostle," and is, therefore, far more plausible than all the other attempts that have been made to account for his two names.

In a similar manner we will have to explain his claim to Roman citizenship. When accused by the people, in Philippi, the Magistrates had his clothes and those of his companions torn from their bodies and ordered them to be flogged. Thereupon they were thrown into prison, where the keeper put their feet in the stocks. On the following day the Magistrates gave the order to set the prisoners free. But Paul refused to accept his freedom. "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out."<sup>154</sup> When the Magistrates heard that they were Roman citizens, they were overcome with fear, for it was unlawful to bind a Roman or to flog him and to throw him into prison unless he had been found guilty and sentenced. They came, therefore, themselves, "and desired them to depart out of the city."

The question as to how Paul became a Roman citizen has led to endless controversies. It was, indeed, possible for people of the provinces to purchase, for large sums, the right of Roman citizenship. This, however, would have

<sup>154</sup>Acts xvi: 37.

had to be done by Paul's father, for Paul professes to have been born a Roman citizen. Though this is in itself highly improbable, it becomes even more so through the fact that Paul does not state that he is a Roman until the following day, after he had been flogged publicly and had been compelled to spend the night in prison. As easily as the magistrates afterwards respected his statement and apologized to him, they would have believed him before, and a few words would have saved him from a flogging and public humiliation. The answer to this, that Paul purposely remained silent so as to have an opportunity to suffer as a martyr for Christ, is absurd. When he was to be flogged the next time, in Jerusalem, he had grown wiser by experience, and saved himself from this punishment by stating at once that he was a Roman citizen. The fact that he claimed the rights of Roman citizenship, not only for himself, but for his companion Silas, too, makes the matter altogether improbable. Paul knew the enormous importance of such citizenship, at that time. "How often," says Cicero, "has the cry, 'I am a Roman citizen,' brought help and succor, even among the barbarians of the remotest parts of the earth." "*Illa vox et imploratio, Civis Romanus sum quae saepe multis in ultimis terris opem inter barbaros et salutem tulit.*"<sup>155</sup> In view of the fact that he must have anticipated the dangers and snares he would meet on his journeys, and what protection his Roman citizenship would give him in such event, it may safely be assumed that if he had really been a Roman citizen he would have carried documentary evidence of his citizenship with him.

But everything tends to disprove this. With every renewed attempt to prove the genuineness of his citizenship, the probability of its actual existence grows fainter. Paul was as little a Roman citizen as he was an American. His emotions must have surely been aroused to their highest pitch during the night he spent in prison, his feet in the stocks. At the same time occurred the great earthquake "which shook the foundations of the prison." Here were all the conditions necessary to the formation of new delu-

<sup>155</sup>Cicero Vero v: 57.

sions, and nothing is more probable, under existing conditions, than that this Roman citizenship represents nothing but a further manifestation of his delusions of grandeur.

As is always the case with paranoiacs, Paul shows a high degree of intolerance against every one whose opinions differ from his own, or who refuses to be subordinate to him. In this respect, the expression, "But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed,"<sup>156</sup> is most characteristic. The result of this trait was that he estranged even those nearest to him, and finally had no one who could tolerate him for any length of time.

Peter, whom Christ called a rock on which he would erect his church, was reprimanded like a school-boy by Paul, who had never seen Christ. Peter was the first to suggest not enforcing the difficult Jewish rites, such as the dietary laws and circumcision, on the "heathen" who had been converted to Christianity. In an address positively rhetorical for a fisherman, he attempts to convince the brethren that all people were equals before God, no matter whether they were circumcized or not.<sup>157</sup> At a later occasion, at Antioch, for obviously diplomatic reasons, Peter, in order not to hurt the religious feelings of the Jews, avoided eating with the "heathen" in the presence of Jews—something which he had previously done without giving it a second thought. When Paul learned this he denounced poor Peter, "before all, publicly," as though the latter had committed a heinous crime. This unseemly arrogance must have been the more offensive to Peter, since Paul, in another place, boasts of the very conduct for which he had so inconsiderately reprimanded Peter. "For," says he, "though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more, and unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are with-

<sup>156</sup>Gal. i:8.<sup>157</sup>Acts xv:7, 11.<sup>158</sup>1 Cor. ix:19, 21.

out law as without law . . . that I might gain them that are without law."<sup>158</sup>

His conduct towards Barnabas, too, was inconsiderate and offensive in the extreme, so that they "went sharply at each other," and separated. His unforgiving attitude towards Marcus, whose only crime consisted of not being equal to the hardships of the first journey, is equally characteristic of his paranoïcal self-aggrandizement.

It is more difficult to prove that he suffered from delusions of persecution from the meagre accounts we have of his life, than it has been to establish his delusions of grandeur. Not because there are no references to persecutions and snares! Oh, no! On the contrary, there are so many of these that we can hardly imagine them increased. But since Paul really had to suffer many hardships, it is almost impossible to decide today how many of his accounts of them are based on real facts and how many are the result of delusions. This may safely be stated, however, that no matter how great were the sufferings his opponents prepared for him, a mentally well-balanced man, who sees his ideal and his vocation in the propagation of a new religious doctrine, would never have made so much fuss about it in his letters, as Paul did. But besides this, among the many accounts of persecutions and attempted murder, there are quite a number which are, to say the least, improbable, and which much more resemble delusions than actual occurrences. When, for example, after his three years' absence in the Arabian desert, he returned to Jerusalem and was introduced to the Apostles by Barnabas, whose friendliness he rewarded but ill, the Greeks are supposed to have set snares for him, "they went about to slay him."<sup>159</sup> What interest could the Greeks have had in his death? There are a great many passages like this, and they point with much probability to delusions of persecution.

Any one who has frequent intercourse with paranoïacs, will know that they are often worried for fear that one may not believe their statements regarding their delusions

<sup>159</sup> Acts ix: 29.

and hallucinations. Particularly in cases where hallucinations of an unusual character are in question, the patient not infrequently adds to his story repeated assurances that his statements are absolutely true and that he has no desire to deceive any one. This accounts for the assurances which occur so frequently in Paul's letters: "I lie not," or "Before God, I lie not."<sup>100</sup> Issuing from the lips of an "apostle appointed by God himself," these ever-recurring assurances that he does not lie are ludicrous.

After the above expositions there can be not the slightest doubt that in Paul we have a typical case of paranoia. In the meagre accounts which we have of him, all the symptoms which go to make up the clinical picture of paranoia are characteristically described. His psychical efficacy was dominated by delusions and hallucinations, and all his actions were governed by these psychopathic processes.

In view of the immense importance which the personality of Paul has gained for the Christian religion, in view of the fact that in him we must recognize the actual founder of Christianity, it is not astonishing that in the course of centuries an immeasurable literature concerning him has arisen. Particularly, his sudden "conversion," the crude change of his religious views, has always occupied the learned world, and given rise to the most eccentric theories.

As in Christ's case, one seemed to be placed here, too, before the alternative either to look upon Paul as an impostor or to believe implicitly in the truth of his statements concerning the actual appearance of Christ. With the proof that Paul was no fraud, but an honest man, the divinity of Christ seemed simultaneously to be established. There could then not be the slightest doubt that Christ actually appeared to "his apostle" amidst thunder and lightning, thereby the whole Christian doctrine—the resurrection, the eternal kingdom, the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ, being put on a firm, unshakable basis.

It was, therefore, to achieve this demonstration, to find the proof that Paul was not an impostor, to which the

<sup>100</sup>2 Cor. xi: 31; Gal. i: 20; 1 Tim. xi: 7; 2 Cor. xii: 6, etc.

learned theologians devoted their greatest energy. And in fact, the proof was established. Nay, it is not even difficult to do this. An impostor, who spends his whole life in intentional deception, must, above all things else, have a motive. What motive could Paul have had to preserve such a deception during his entire life? Material gain? Of this there could be no question. Paul was and remained poor. He speaks, several times, of the support which the Macedonians gave him so that he could carry on his work. Power? At the moment before he was converted to Christ he was supplied with unlimited power by the High-Priest, while from thenceforth he could at best be only a leader of the proletariat, since the first Christian congregations were formed, mostly, from the lowest classes of the populace. Scientific ambition? He was a pupil of Gamaliel, one of the most eminent scholars of his time; he belonged to the most respected sect of the Jews, the Pharisees. All this he gave up to proclaim the divine fame of a crucified workingman. What could he expect or hope from this step? He knew, better than any one else, in what imminent danger of death the Christians found themselves. They were scattered, persecuted, despised. What induced him to join them? And then the colossal task, to the fulfillment of which he devoted himself! He had to struggle against the severest privations, he had to endure hunger and thirst, he was threatened and persecuted by robbers, and when, finally, he reached his goal and preached "the word of Christ," the raging rabble not infrequently fell upon him and dragged him before the authorities to accuse him of revolutionary speeches, or something of like nature. No! There can be no question of Paul having had a motive to continue acting the part of an impostor.

Besides, his actions, as such, were not those of an adventurer. His sudden "conversion" on the way to Damascus, the completely unexpected hallucination in the form of an illusion, the three days' blindness following thereon, all have the stamp of genuineness. An impostor, who knew that the supposed appearance of Christ could not be perceptible to his companions, would never have

chosen this manner of receiving a "revelation." He would, on the contrary, have had this revelation take place at a time when no one else was present. The earnestness and simplicity of his manner, his absolute conviction of his own power and strength, his complete trust in the divine power which had made him its apostle, were so natural and unaffected that it seems altogether impossible that a person could have simulated such conduct during an entire lifetime.

On this point, therefore, there never was any doubt that intentional deception was just as much out of the question with Paul as it was with Christ. Both men were fully convinced of the absolute truth of all their statements, and it was this very conviction, this faith in themselves, that led to their success.

The alternative, whether one had to deal with deception or honesty, had, therefore, to be decided in favor of the latter. A third possibility there was not. If Paul was an honest, decent man, his statements had to be accepted as absolutely truthful. One had to believe in the many conversations he carried on with Christ and the Holy Ghost; and in doing so the Christian doctrine became an unqualified fact.

We have frequently pointed out that paranoia, as such, does not necessarily carry with it intellectual inferiority. On the contrary, there are paranoiacs among artists, poets, and authors, who, in spite of their mental abnormalities, have performed great works, works of genius. Let us call your attention again to Jean Jacques Rousseau, who belongs in this category. Paul, the actual founder of Christianity, could, in spite of his paranoia, formulate ethical and religious laws, which might have been of actual use and benefit to mankind. But of what nature are the doctrines, which are contained in his various letters? Certain exhortations, as for example, to behave decently, not to murder, not to steal, to be at peace with one's fellowmen, to honor and respect one's parents, to perform one's work diligently, etc.—such exhortations were perfectly natural, and were made to the people by all influential men, by "heathen" as well as by Jews and Christians. What is of real interest to



us is his doctrine in regard to actual Christianity. In this respect his expositions are for the most part so incoherent and confused that they often bear the stamp of insanity. Here, for example, is a specimen of his manner of speaking: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching in vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead."<sup>101</sup>

This is the style which is exhibited endlessly in his letters. It is, truly, not easy to read a deep meaning therein. Nevertheless, this has been attempted in all possible ways. Thousands of treatises and commentaries have been written about these chaotic utterances. The more incomprehensible and incoherent the style, the more "wise" the "deep meaning" at the bottom of the matter. What could those congregations, formed mainly from the lowest classes of the people, to whom these letters were addressed, have thought of words like this: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?"<sup>102</sup>

Having been thoroughly convinced that Paul was no

<sup>101</sup> 1 Cor. xv: 13, 21.

<sup>102</sup> 1 Cor. xv: 26, 29.

impostor, and that all the revelations that were made to him, as well as his intercourse with Christ and the Holy Ghost, were based on absolute truth, every word he uttered had to be considered as the most profound wisdom. The more incomprehensible and disconnected were his writings, the deeper was supposed to be the wisdom contained in them. Chrysostom says, in one of his sermons, that the resurrection of Christ can in no other way be so clearly shown as by Paul's "conversion." To this he adds the conclusion that Christ intentionally made a sinner, who had blasphemed and persecuted him, his apostle, to show his great mercy and goodness. In this way the learned theologians have praised and worshiped the ravings of insanity as divine revelations, up to the present day. Lord Lyttleton, in writing about Paul, says: "The conversion and apostleship of St. Paul alone, duly considered, is, of itself, a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation."<sup>103</sup>

If we consider that the mass of incoherent, delirious utterances, as they exist in Paul's letters, has been for nearly two thousand years looked upon by the whole civilized world as the greatest wisdom, not by the rabble, but by the representatives of science; if we consider that mankind has made these manifestations of a diseased brain its highest ideal, it is really pathetic. But the objective scientist who longs for the truth, will not allow himself to be influenced thereby. No matter how many ideals may be shattered, no matter into what abyss the proud civilization of the present may be hurled thereby, those facts can not be altered. Like Jesus Christ, Paul was a paranoiac, whose thoughts and acts all rested on delusions and hallucinations. His writings which were handed down to us, and which laid the foundation stone of the Christian religion, are in every way characteristic of the insanity at the bottom of them.

<sup>103</sup> Lyttleton's "Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul.

## IX. THE "VICTORY" OF CHRISTIANITY.

At the time when Christ was crucified in Jerusalem and the doctrine of the resurrected Messiah began to spread throughout the world, the mighty Roman Empire had reached the climax of its external splendor. From the "ends of the earth" in the far West to the lands of crudest barbarism, in the orient, everything had been conquered by the victorious Roman arms. The Roman Emperor, in calling himself the "Ruler of the World," was, after all, not far amiss. And this proud empire, the legions of which no people on earth could resist, was to be morally subdued and conquered by the doctrine of the crucified Messiah. At first, moving modestly in seclusion, like a fire smoldering under the surface, the new doctrine was propagated gradually, until, at last, religious enthusiasm like a flame burst forth, wrapping everything around it in a scorching glare. When finally the machinery of the state, undermined by corruption and internal troubles, collapsed, and the rotten edifice of the mighty empire broke down completely, there arose on its ruins the doctrine of Christianity, spreading its victorious banner over the entire civilized world.

What a marvelous spectacle! Who would consider it credible, who would deem it possible, if, instead of an actual fact, this whole occurrence were merely the product of a poetical mind? No creation of the imagination, no matter how eccentric, could produce anything resembling ever so little, this naked truth! A plain man from the far East is honored and worshiped as God by the powerful Roman Empire, and after its destruction, by the entire civilized world! And who is the man who accomplished this?

He is not a hero, who, sword in hand, won fame and honor on the battlefield. He is no king, no emperor! Nor is he a man far ahead of his time in intellectual achievement. Not a philosopher nor poet. He is no artistic genius who wins the sympathies of his fellowmen by his noble art. No! None of all these! A plain laborer, an ordinary carpenter's son!

And now, the people! What kind of a people were they from whom the world received its God? Which was the nation that could boast that to it alone of all nations was born the only Son of God? Not the proud Romans before whose power the whole world bowed. Not that ideal people, the Greeks, to whom the world owed art and science. It was not even Egypt, the cradle of the oldest culture of mankind. No! It was none of these noble peoples who produced the "Savior" of all mankind. An insignificant, subjugated people, on whom the noble Roman looked down with disdain, a people whom historians have always called the most despised nation of ancient times. It was that always hated people, the Jews, whom God had chosen from all other nations, to whom to send his "only son."

Just as Christianity is full of the most palpable contradictions in other respects, so this contempt of the Jews, too, presents an enormous contradiction. Faith in the "Son of God, Jesus Christ," necessitates faith in "God the Father," the "only, eternal God." As a matter of fact, Christianity has allowed this alleged "Jehovah" to remain in his position of sole rule, therefore calling itself a Monotheistic religion, in spite of the somewhat polytheistic trinity. If, however, you believe in this one and only God, Jehovah, you must also believe in the so-called "revelations" of this God, for they are the only foundation for his alleged existence. But the Israelites were the only chosen people on earth, to whom God revealed himself. Nay, it was his own people, whom he personally governed, whom he placed high above all other peoples of the earth. One of the two, therefore, must logically have been wrong in his judgment. Either God who made the people of Israel his chosen people, or

the rest of mankind who showed this people only hatred and contempt.

In answer to this the following is urged today: The Israelites of ancient times, of the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were assuredly the elect of God, to whom he revealed himself, and whom he made "his people." Moses, too, was chosen by God to lead "his people" and to proclaim his will to them. But in the course of centuries, this people proved itself so ungrateful and sinful, that God finally turned away from them and held them up to the contempt of all other nations.

This sounds very fine. But you must not forget that it lays in God's power not only to guide the words and actions of human beings, but even to regulate their thoughts. It is, according to this, after all, no one but God himself who is responsible for the sinfulness of his people. He could just as well have made them obedient and pious.

How could you believe that God would act in such opposition to himself? He would certainly make himself ridiculous by such contradictions.

Be this as it may, this much is certain, that God, in spite of all the sinfulness of the Jews, must have considered them "his people," as late as the time of the birth of Christ. For how else could he have sent this people his only Son? He might just as well have sent him to the noble Romans, or to the ideal Greeks, or even to the primitive Germans.

In recognition of this fact, one extends alleged partiality of God towards "his people" up to the time of the death of Jesus Christ. The grewsome crucifixion of the Savior, the blame for which one prefers to put upon the Jews, is the capital crime of which this people stands accused, for which it was repudiated by God, deprived of its country, scattered all over the world and subjected to the contempt and hatred of the rest of mankind.

In reply to this not only may the before mentioned responsibilities of God be set forth, but also the fact that in the "Holy Scriptures" it is expressly emphasized that the crucifixion of Christ was resolved upon in the counsel of

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<sup>164</sup>Besides many other passages, ref. to Romans ix: 16, 21.

Providence long before it took place. The Savior came to earth in human form only for the very purpose of taking the sins of the "fathful" upon himself, by shedding his blood for them. If this be true, why are his crucifiers to be reproached? For then they were, after all, only the necessary tools of an "all-wise providence." If the execution of the "Savior" were a crime, why did the divine Omnipotence permit it? Why did not Christ ascend to Heaven before his enemies slew him on the cross? According to the Scriptures, Christ not only knew that he would be betrayed, but who his betrayer would be. Why did he make this man his apostle? Did all this happen through "divine providence," merely to make the Jews, who until now had been the "chosen people," hated by all mankind? What a miserable conception of a God it is, according to which he intentionally turns men into criminals for no other purpose but to subject them to disdain and hatred! Is it, furthermore, compatible with the justice of a Deity to hold not only an entire nation, but also all its descendants, during thousands of years, responsible for the sins of a few? Were not Peter and Paul put to death by the orders of the Roman Emperor? And who would think of holding a whole nation as well as its descendants responsible therefor?

Assuming, however, that all these apparent contradictions could be explained and the matter were exactly as the Christian doctrine presents it, how can the hate and derision with which the early Jewish followers of Christ were treated by their "Christian brethren" of other nations, be justified?

Originally the Christians were only a special sect of Jews. The first fifteen Bishops of Jerusalem were Jews and not only mayhap proselytes from neighboring nations, but circumcized Jews of the most genuine sort. During this entire epoch which extended to the revolution under Hadrian and therefore lasted during nearly the whole of the first century after Christ, Christian congregations were made up exclusively of "orthodox Jews."<sup>105</sup> In like manner nearly all the other Christian congregations were

<sup>105</sup>Eusebius Pomphilus, History of the Church, liv, c, v.

founded by Jews, so that Christianity had grown to considerable importance long before non-Jews accepted this religion. Since one part of the new doctrine was the propagation of Christ's glory throughout the world, the early Christian congregations which were still composed chiefly of Jews had to win over as many "heathen" as possible, to the new faith.

To make admission into Christianity easier, it was decided to curtail the ceremonies handed down from olden times, and, if necessary to abolish them altogether. Since it was futile to expect that the masses of various nations would submit to the painful operation of circumcision, it was decided to drop this ceremony, although just this one belonged to the most sacred rites of Judaism.

Would you not suppose that from the purely "Christian" viewpoint, these first Christians, the descendants of Judaism, should at least have received the respect of their new religious brethren? By birth, they belonged to the "Chosen People," to whom God had sent his Son. With the appearance of the latter, they became his enthusiastic adherents and strove to carry out all the instructions of their "Master" and "Redeemer." Nevertheless, these converted "heathens" displayed the same hatred towards them which they showed to the Jews who remained faithful to the old religion.

While the abolition of the Jewish ceremonies originally was only a confession, to facilitate the admission of the "heathens" to Christianity, the tables were soon turned and the continuance of these customs "ordained by God," was proclaimed a mortal sin. Justin Martyr, though humane and just himself, had to admit that a great many of the fathers of the church denied those "judaizing" Christians every hope of salvation, and forbade holding any communication with them. More than a thousand years later, "Christians," who advocated anything in favor of Mosaic rites, were tortured and burned as heretics. But of this, later on.

The fact that in spite of all these actual occurrences, Christianity, created by the despised Jews, conquered the world, is and will continue to be the most marvelous

phenomenon in all history. The devout Christian explains this phenomenon very simply in his metaphysical ways by the mere will of the Deity, Jesus Christ.

To have his name proclaimed throughout the world and to convert mankind to the belief in him, sufficed to attain this result. As God once said: "There shall be light," so Christ, by his divine will, now conquered the faith of mankind.

We shall have to try to explain this extraordinary phenomenon in a less fantastic and more rational way. We shall have to examine the political and social conditions of the Roman Empire; we shall have to consider the philosophical and religious views of that time, to obtain a clear idea of how and whereby Christianity carried off the victory over all other religions.

There is a certain course, through which all the states of ancient times had to run in noticeably like manner. Forced by the struggle for existence and the impulse of self-preservation, the naked and defenseless people of pre-historic times united themselves into smaller or greater communities, for the purpose of providing endurable conditions of life for everyone, which single individuals alone could never hope to attain. People earned their livelihood by common work. In company they went hunting, and together they defended home and hearth against the enemy who threatened them from without. While primitive man thought only of his own personal welfare, and of that of those nearest to him, the commonwealth now became the chief object of his care. The subservience of the "I" to the common interest, the sacrifice of all personal advantages for the common good was, therefore, considered the greatest virtue of man.

With the gradual increase of personal needs, and the private property arising therefrom, the relation of the individual to the community began gradually to change. Personal interests again began to step more and more into the foreground. Conditions changed, particularly through the development of the private ownership of real estate. While fishing and hunting still depended on the public ownership



of the ground, agriculture showed the best results in individual farming, a consequence of which was the private ownership of the soil. Through the struggle with other nations and the subjection of neighboring states, slavery originated, through which human labor became a regular merchandise. The easy acquisition of slaves, as well as the small cost of their maintenance, materially lowered the price of all the necessities of living, and as a result the demand for them increased. From this developed the craving for wealth and luxury. So long as wealth meant merely the possession of merchandise, limits were naturally established. But with the introduction of the medium of exchange, of money, the enormous accumulation of capital in the hands of a few originated, and the poor and laboring classes came into existence. The difference between rich and poor became ever greater, and the entire relationship of people to one another, as well as to the community, changed. Devotion to the State, self-sacrifice for the commonwealth disappeared. In their place came the boundless craving for gain and wealth. With the increase of poverty, arose dissatisfaction with the existing order of things. The poor threatened the rich whose powerful wealth kept them submerged. Ever looser grew the bonds which had bound the individual to the common interests, till finally the now frail edifice of the State collapsed, to become the booty of another people. This is the course taken by all communities of ancient times.

The quickest and therefore the most conspicuous illustration of this course of events is given by the Athenians. In the short span of perhaps a hundred and fifty years, that is, from the Persian wars until the conquest of Greece by Philip of Macedon, we see how the internal conditions change in a manner very similar to the one above described. Class distinctions, though they existed even then, were, at the time of the Persian War, of so little importance that the common interest in the community and the sacrifice of self for the support of the State, were not lessened thereby. And how different was the state of affairs a century and a half later when the struggle for wealth and power had

become the chief interest of the citizen. Demosthenes repeatedly points out this change of conditions, which he regards as the source of all social evils, and prophetically anticipates the destruction which was to result therefrom.

"Let us," he says, <sup>166</sup> "cast a glance at the conduct of our forefathers and at our own, so that, by comparison, we may learn to improve ourselves. The magnificent edifices we have inherited from them, the rich decorations of our city, our temple, our harbor, our public buildings—all these are so manifold and magnificent that hardly anything remains for their descendants to add to them. Look at those mighty arches, those armories, those pillared halls, and at all the beautiful landmarks of our city, which they have bequeathed to us. And in spite of all this grandeur, the houses occupied by their great men were so modest, so indicative of the common spirit of equality, so characteristic of our situation! Any one familiar with the house of Themistocles or that of Cimon or Aristides or Miltiades, or any other of their great men, knows that they are not distinguished by luxury of any kind. But now, ye men of Athens! In the matter of public edifices, the city is satisfied with repairing the streets and with providing water or attending to trivial matters. But in private life, the men who govern your affairs have built themselves houses which not only surpass in luxury and grandeur those of their fellow citizens, but set all public buildings themselves in the shade. Others have bought country places which in luxury and magnificence have surpassed their most extravagant fancies."

This picture of moral decadence which is but given here in its infancy, shows itself continually growing, first in Athens, and then in the other Greek states, until their undermining leads to complete destruction.

Like all other states of ancient times, the great proud Roman Empire too had to go through this process of development, which took place everywhere with absolute inevitableness. Here too, during the height of the glory of the republic, we find the most enthusiastic self-sacrifice of the

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<sup>166</sup>Demosthenes' speech on the regulation of the state.

individual for the common good. But in later centuries the process of decay was consummated, step by step, until, finally, this mighty empire with all the accumulated culture of ancient times, tottered and fell, and became the prey of the wild hordes from the North. Like all other ancient countries, the Roman Empire, too, was destroyed only because of its internal decadence. The enemy, forcing its way from without, was at best the *causa excitans* for the destruction prepared by internal troubles. Not Attila, nor Alaric, could have overthrown this mighty empire, had it stood on a solid basis and firm ground. At the time when Peter and Paul came to Rome, and the Jews who believed in Christ tried to spread the new religious doctrine throughout the world, the Roman Empire was already at the beginning of its inevitable end. Of the once renowned heroism of the Romans, of their self-sacrificing love and devotion to the fatherland, of the noble negation of self for the good of the commonwealth, not the slightest trace remained. The republic had gone to pieces because the foundation on which it was built, the energy of the Roman citizens, had been undermined. The empire represented, politically, a complete contrast to the once flourishing republic. While there the machinery of state, the government of the people and public officials found their *raison d'être* in the welfare of the state, and made use of the force of arms only for the attainment and support of this purpose, here things were exactly the reverse. The emperor, with his enormous court, was the centre of the empire, and the public offices were filled with his creatures, who formed the main support of his power. The powerful army, by which the emperor had been chosen, expected an adequate reward from him, and thus the people were forced to provide for the maintenance of the army. While conducting the affairs of state and fulfilling the duties of public office had been a matter of honor for a free Roman citizen during the time of the republic, these things were left under the empire to slaves or to freedmen. All those numerous officeholders were not, as under the republic, looked upon as men who fulfilled their duty towards the common good, but were considered

personal servants of the emperor, a position which the free Roman citizen despised.

All the efforts of Roman society were concentrated on the accumulation of wealth, on satisfying sensual desires, on reveling in overpowering luxury and unheard-of splendor. The morals of the people sank lower and lower. Just as the degenerate, insane emperors hesitated at no crime to satisfy their momentary appetites and desires, their immorality and debauchery were reproduced in the entire people. It seemed as though every feeling of decency and morality had vanished from the earth.

"Rome," writes Tacitus,<sup>167</sup> "was destroyed by fire; its old and honored temples lay in smoke and ashes. The capitol was enveloped in flames, started by fanatic citizens. The sacred traditions of religion were desecrated. Adultery reigned without the slightest control. Neighboring islands were filled with exiles. Rocks and lonely places were stained by secret murders, and Rome itself became a scene of horror; where those of noble birth or hardily-earned wealth, were sentenced to death; where the effort to obtain public office as well as the modest refusal of the same were alike considered crimes, where virtue was a crime which led to inevitable destruction, where the guilt of the accuser and the reward of his viciousness were equally disquieting, where the office of the priest, the honor of the consul, the position of governor in the provinces and even the throne itself were considered the just booty of this accursed race; where nothing was sacred, nothing safe from the outstretched hand of avarice; where slaves were induced to bear false witness or were instigated against their own masters, and where he who had no enemies was destroyed by the treachery of a friend."

This was the moral condition of the Roman society. At the time, when the empire reached the climax of its magnificence, the inner process of decomposition had already made rapid strides. In fact, the external victories, the subjugation of foreign nations, were the only means to postpone, if not to prevent, the great collapse.

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<sup>167</sup>Tacitus, History 1, 2.

The true, sound stock of the people, the free farmers, had long before pined away, and for the most part, gone to pieces. In their place was the great property-owner, who had his land tilled by slaves, with whom the small farmer could not compete. In like manner, the industries of the cities were carried on exclusively by slaves. All prisoners of war were made slaves, who either tilled the land of the gentleman farmer or toiled in the factories in the large cities. Every new war brought an enormous number of new slaves; indeed, many wars were carried on for the very purpose of getting new slaves. The mass of slaves grew enormously and their value became accordingly low. About three hundred years before Christ there were four hundred thousand slaves in Athens, and only twenty-one thousand citizens. Æschinus was looked upon as particularly poor, because he owned only seven slaves. During the first century before Christ, Lucullus, the Roman general, sold prisoners of war, as slaves, for seventy-five cents apiece.

Wealthy Romans owned thousands of slaves, so that the value of all merchandise grew lower and lower. But with the ease with which articles of luxury were produced, the demand for them rose, so that the extravagance, the splendor, and the wastefulness, that reigned in the empire, were probably never equaled, before or since.

The ruins of the gigantic edifices, the monumental works of art, which still today arouse the astonishment of the world, show, at any rate, the power and greatness of the wealthy class, as well as a well-developed appreciation of art and most exquisite taste. Nevertheless, these gigantic structures are the dumb witnesses of the tyranny and cruelty of that time; of the inhumanity with which slaves were treated, that they were, as a matter of fact, not treated like human beings at all.

The enormous accumulation of capital in the hands of a few, as also the exclusive use of slaves for work in the large industries and in agriculture, led to the complete pauperization of the greater part of the people. The free farmers of former times had long since disappeared from the country and now filled the large cities as a proletariat

of loafers. Rome in particular formed the headquarters of this "*plebs urbana*." Nearly a million persons lived there as beggars, and depended on public and private charity. Though they had nothing in the world to call their own, sleeping in open places, such as public buildings and temples, they retained their pride in their Roman citizenship, and in disdain left all work to the slaves. All they wanted was the little bread necessary to keep them alive, the plays in the circus, and the brutal spectacle of the gladiators. Not only from Italy, but from all the provinces of the mighty empire streamed the mass of those reduced to beggary, who had nothing to lose, and in this adventuresome way hoped to find their luck in the capital of the world.

The noble race of genuine Romans had long since disappeared. In their place was the degenerate mixture of the most diverse peoples. The great mass of the population consisted of slaves, who were not even looked upon as human beings, and of reduced vagabonds, who led a life, absolutely unworthy of mankind. The few rich people, who monopolized the entire wealth, lived in unheard of debauchery and indecency. Everything decent, every feeling of honor, had become strange to them. To satisfy their sensual desires seemed to them the only purpose in life.

The beginning of the moral and social decadence of the Roman Empire dates back to the last centuries of the republic. A few men had correctly judged, at least in part, the cause of the social decline. The many attempts during the last centuries of the republic, to restore the class of farmers, which had been completely ruined, by a distribution of farms to proletarians, distinctly show a correct appreciation of existing conditions, but were, nevertheless, unable to stop the rolling wheel in its downward course. The destructive system of carrying on a large business through the work of slaves had already undermined the social edifice too far to save it by such palliative measures. For the same reason, the two Gracchi failed, in the second century after Christ, in their noble attempts at reform.

In vain did Julius Cæsar try, by new laws and every imaginable reform, to re-establish the sound basis of the

state. Famous and glorious as were the results of his victories over the enemy, it was impossible for even his great genius to prevent the downfall of the machinery of the state.

When finally the republic collapsed, and on its ruins the flag of the empire unfurled itself, it was well known that the old Roman country had long ago ceased to exist, that the change of the republic into a monarchy meant far more than a mere change of the constitution; it meant that a social disease, a moral and physical degeneration, had developed.

Was this disease incurable? Was there no remedy for this evil? Could this disastrous tide not be stemmed in some way? Was the basis of the state, which had been characterized two hundred years ago by Ennius in the words: "*Moribus antiquis stat res Romana virisque*" lost forever? The answer to these questions had been the task of statesmen, philosophers, and poets; in short, of every one who took any interest in the maintenance of the state.

Soon an answer to these questions was believed to have been found. Greece already had found itself in the same state of decay at which Rome had arrived now, when the Roman Republic was still at the height of its moral and social greatness. The difference which existed between the two countries at the time became a matter of grave thought to the philosophers, and many were the comparisons made between the two states.

To judge of the state of affairs, as we would do today, there was too little social and economic experience. Instead of recognizing that the process of development of the states, as it was briefly explained above, was the result of the social mechanism, and therefore would have to affect all the states of ancient times alike, it was believed possible, to explain the momentary difference between Greece and Rome in a very simple way. "The most important difference for the better," writes Polybius, "which the Roman Commonwealth appears to me to display, is in their religious beliefs, for I conceive that what in other nations is looked upon as a reproach, I mean a scrupulous fear of the

Gods, is the very thing which keeps the Roman Commonwealth together."

Polybius himself was obviously not religious. But he was of the opinion that the masses could not get along without fear of the Gods, without fear of punishment and hope for reward.

"If it were possible to form a state wholly of philosophers, such a custom would perhaps be unnecessary. But seeing that every multitude is fickle and full of lawless desires, unreasoning anger, and violent passion, the resource is to keep them in check by mysterious terrors and scenic effects of this sort. Wherefore, to my mind, the ancients were not acting without purpose, or at random, when they brought in among the vulgar, those opinions about the Gods and the belief in the punishment in Hades; much rather do I think that men nowadays are acting rashly and foolishly in rejecting them."

This view, that the belief in divine recompense, fear of punishment and hope of reward, must be kept alive among the people, is very old. It existed among philosophers of all times, and it exists today. In spite of their being absolutely convinced that the legend of Hell was merely a human invention, they believed they possessed in it a means for improving the people and their morals. In this sense, Emperor Augustus, animated by the very best motives, tried to restore the cult of the Gods, which had gone to ruin. He erected a great many new temples and insisted on the strictest performance of religious rites.

Among educated people, the belief in the Gods, as pictured by Homer and the other authors of classical antiquity, had long since vanished. In its stead had appeared the various philosophical systems, especially those of the Stoics and Epicureans. The many Jews who at that time were to be found all over the world, and among whom there were many highly educated men, undoubtedly exerted considerable influence on the philosophical views of that time. The Jews had made many proselytes everywhere, but particularly in Rome, and it may, therefore, safely be assumed that their religious views were generally known. If, conse-



quently, we meet a pronounced Monotheism in the philosophical system of the Stoics, it is not difficult to recognize therein the "only, eternal God" of the Jews. "We," says Seneca, "consider Jupiter the guardian and ruler of the universe, the soul and the spirit, the Lord and Creator of the world, no matter what you may call him. Would you call him Fate? You will not err. He it is on whom all things depend, the cause of causes. Would you call him Providence? You would speak aright. He it is whose thought provides for the universe, that it may move on its course unhurt and do its part. Would you call him Nature? You will not speak amiss. He it is of whom all things are seen, through whose spirit we live. Would you call him Universe? You will not be deceived. He himself is everything you see; everything contains his parts, and he sustains himself with his own energy."

Is not this distinct Monotheism? Of course, the more personal God of the Jews is, to a certain extent, idealized in the philosophy of the Stoics, and by the amplification of this conception, Monotheism becomes Pantheism, which, then, is not far removed from Atheism.

The doctrine that everything that lives forms a part of the one great Deity was apt to give the impoverished citizen and even the lower slave a certain self-respect. From the misery of life, from trials and privation, from the yoke of oppression, the Stoic fled to thoughts of this doctrine, where he formed part of the Deity, and the emperor himself was of no more importance than he. The Stoic was a monist in the modern sense of the word. He recognized no separation of body and soul. The world, as such, was a rational being, the course of which was governed by the law of necessity. Absolute suppression of self, negation of all individual suffering, were the principles of his morality. Joys and pleasures counted for nothing with him. The subordination of all emotion and feeling to reason was the rule of conduct of his life.

In spite of the philosophical skepticism towards all religious views, in spite of the contempt evinced for the old doctrine of the Gods, the entire people, from the em-

peror to the beggar, was imbued with every conceivable superstition. That land of miracles, the cradle of the oldest legends of Gods and Heroes—the far East—continued to flood the whole empire with its magicians, fortune-tellers and astrologers. From all parts of the Eastern provinces adventurers hastened to the far West, there to seek their fortunes. The Egyptian Gods found their way to Italy, and Isis and Serapis rejoiced in their temples in Rome, even before the destruction of the republic. From Chaldea came the so-called “Mathematicians,” who read the future in the stars. Syria sent her fortune-tellers, and even Israelitish “Magicians” and “healers of the sick” put in their appearance.

These were the conditions when Paul undertook his missionary journey through Greece and Italy, and founded the first Christian congregations in the Roman Empire. As has already frequently been emphasized, those who joined the new faith were chiefly Jews. The educated Greeks and Romans naturally laughed at the wandering Jew and his “Savior.” Men who had studied philosophy, and who in their cosmical ideas had arrived at a point beyond which we can not penetrate even today, classed the miracles that were reported as having taken place in Jerusalem in the same category with all the other romances that were told of the Orient. What an impression it must have had on men whose Pantheistic views of the world had long before caused them to abandon the belief in a personal God when a man from the far East claimed that God had sent his only Son to the Jews! What must men whose scientific knowledge had long ago convinced them that there was no such thing as a separation between soul and body have thought when this “Son of God” was said to have arisen from the dead, and when they were informed that all the rest of the faithful world would one day be resurrected from the dead! How could men who had long ago buried the doctrine of Tartarus take it seriously when the heavenly kingdom with its angels as well as hell with its devils and evil spirits was portrayed to them!

Educated people, if they condescended at all to listen

to the new doctrine, had only a pitiful smile for it. To them it did not even contain anything new. That Gods came to earth in the guise of human beings was nothing at all unusual in Greek mythology. Likewise, the "resurrection" and individual life after death had already been pictured by Homer. But all this had long ago been buried and forgotten. No educated person believed in the actual existence of these creations of the imagination. How could one dare, today, to serve these nursery-tales to the educated world? Today! In this enlightened age! Today! Four centuries after men like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle had enriched the world with their wisdom!

The Jews had clung tenaciously to their old faith. The old Jehovah, who drove Adam and Eve out of Paradise, who "revealed himself" to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who on Mount Sinai had dictated the laws to Moses, continued to live and rule, as he ever did. The Jews are the only people which has never changed its faith. There was no mythology for them. The faith, inherited from their fathers, they worshiped as the most sacred thing in the world. But for this very reason anything that tried to shake this doctrine was monstrous to them. Anything that in any way offended the majesty of God was in their eyes the most unpardonable crime.

Very significant of Paul's different reception by the Greeks and the Jews, is his remark concerning this: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."<sup>168</sup>

It was the natural course of things that, as has been emphasized frequently in the foregoing pages, the first Christian congregations consisted exclusively of the very lowest class. The educated Jew looked upon the legend of Christ as a blasphemy and a work of the devil, while the educated Greek and Roman looked down on the whole commotion with contempt.

When Paul began to speak of the "resurrection" in Athens, the abode of art and science, he was generally laughed at. A people like the Athenians had no tolerance

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<sup>168</sup> 1 Cor. i: 23.

for the speeches of a Paul. In Athens his efforts found no fertile soil. Though he wrote letters to the Corinthians and Thessalonians, he wrote none to the Athenians. Paul never went to Athens again, though he frequently returned to Greece, and visited Corinth not less than three times. The little congregation, founded in his time in Athens, very quickly disbanded, and was founded again only in 165 A. D.

As Christ had boasted that "knowledge" was withheld from the "wise" and the "prudent," and only the "foolish" had faith in him, so Paul, too, makes a virtue of necessity and lauds the circumstance that his congregations are made up of only the lowest strata of the populace. "For ye see," he writes to the Corinthians, "your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are."<sup>169</sup>

What Paul here says of his congregation in Corinth, that it is not made up of the wise, the prudent, and the noble, but of the foolish, the weak, and the despised, is true of the first Christian communities in all other parts of the world. But these dregs of the people, the proletariat in large cities and the enormous herds of slaves, formed by far the majority of the population. The educated portion consisted of an insignificant minority. Denied every means of enjoying the pleasures, in which the wealthy reveled, and unable to escape from the misery of the times, they began to build castles in the air, to dream of an ideal realm, in which there would be neither want nor poverty, in which there would be no wars, in which only joy, good fortune, and blessings would be their portion. Authors fostered the hopes of the people by poetic descriptions of this ardently desired realm, hinting at the return of the "Golden Age."

Now they were told of the miracle that took place in Jerusalem. Jehovah, the mighty ruler of the world, had

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<sup>169</sup>1 Cor. i: 26-28.

sent his own Son down from the heights to redeem mankind, and to found the ardently desired realm of the blessed. If the delusions of Jesus were in themselves highly eccentric, they were now, through the frenzied emanations of a poetic fantasy, embellished in the most fabulous manner. The most eccentric, in this regard, is the faith in the so-called Chiliasm, according to which Christ and all those, who believed in him, would return, and, after a frightful struggle, in which Satan was to be overpowered, would found the kingdom of a thousand years on earth. After the lapse of this time, a new heaven and a new earth would come into being, and on this earth a new Jerusalem, the seat of absolute blessedness would be created, where death would lose its power.

It can easily be understood how these doctrines brought comfort and hope to the sorely oppressed people, especially at the time of the most cruel persecution. They found comfort in the belief in a not distant compensation. Nevertheless, Christianity would never have attained that importance, which finally led to a complete victory, if it had not been able to give the people something more substantial than empty promises for the distant future and hopes of recompense for the suffering, endured in this world. There is an old proverb that says "man can not live on love and air alone." Especially not on love for a "crucified Messiah." What the people needed far more than promises of the return of the Savior and of a kingdom of a thousand years, was daily bread, a roof over their heads, and clothes for their bodies for the self-preservation in this world in which, after all and for the time being they still had to live. The Christian propaganda, which shows such an enormous success, was, at first, far less of a religious than of a social nature. In one of the foregoing chapters it has already been stated that one of the chief conditions for admission to the Christian brotherhood was the renunciation of all personal property. Every Christian congregation had its officials, to whom all goods had to be delivered, and who looked after an equal distribution of all property. This kind of communism owes its origin partly to the utterances of

Christ, who demanded of the rich disciple that above all else he give up his fortune, if he desired to be saved. In part, this institution was an imitation of the already mentioned Jewish sect of Essenes. Originally, at the founding of the first Christian congregations, it was naively demanded of each member that he give up all his possessions, and the means acquired in this manner were equally distributed. As in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, everyone who attempted to secrete any of his property from the congregation was severely punished. Naturally, such a system could not continue to exist for any length of time, no one bothering himself about the manner of producing or acquiring new means.

Gradually, in the course of the first century, things were done more practically. Obviously, people had learned that common consumption alone did not assure the desired end; the necessities of life had also to be produced. No doubt, those who became the leaders of the congregations in later times were men quite different from the naïve fishermen from Jerusalem or the fanatic paranoiac, Paul.

Furthermore, people had learned to understand that it required means to produce anything, and that, therefore, nothing could be produced as long as people were compelled to give up everything they owned. This necessarily led to the restitution of private property. If, therefore, communism was to be retained, it could be done only by leaving to everyone the means of producing, and demanding only that everybody deliver his products for common use.

Considering the social conditions of that time, it is only natural that this could not be carried out in a strictly scientific way. The idea was only that each person was to retain as his own his means of production, particularly his land; that he was morally bound to earn through it as much as possible, but that all which was produced thereby was not to be considered his own property, but should be put at the disposal of the community. Even the use of his ground he was compelled to renounce, so far as he was not in need of it himself. If, for example, some one had no house, he could ask his Christian brother, who owned

more than one house, to give him one; but the owner still retained possession of the property.

This invasion of the social life of the people, this momentarily successful attempt to assuage the sufferings and privations of the people and to provide them with an existence worthy of human beings, this equality and brotherhood of all the members of the community—this it was that gave Christianity its immense success and final victory. Why should even a single citizen of the common people hesitate to join this community? He had nothing to lose and everything to gain. The fact that agriculture was exclusively in the hands of the wealthy property owners, who also had innumerable slaves, explains the fact that Christianity confined itself entirely to the cities during the first centuries of its existence. The slaves could not join the new brotherhood without permission from their masters, and the latter, as capitalists, were naturally opposed to the new communism. The difference which existed in this respect between city and country was so marked that the word "Pagan," land-owner, was used in speaking of non-Christians. Later on, the English word "pagan" and the German "Heiden" developed therefrom.

Like the startling success of Christianity, another phenomenon finds its explanation in the early Christian communism, and that is—the many cruel persecutions of the Christians, extending over several centuries. Why should this new brotherhood be persecuted on account of its religious views? All the first Christians were Jews, so that the Christians were originally looked upon as a Jewish sect. But the Jews had lived for a number of centuries in all parts of the Roman Empire, and particularly in Rome, without suffering any interference in the observance of their religion. It is true, there existed no particular love between the two peoples, and the Jews were several times expelled from Rome. But this was always caused by temporary political disturbances. They were never attacked because of their religion and at that time were never persecuted, as the Christians were.

Why, then, should there have been such fanatical op-

position to the Christians? The Christian religion was nothing but a modification of the old, well-known Judaism. Why should the Emperor Tiberius excite himself because Jehovah had a son? As far as he was concerned, Jehovah might have had a dozen sons! These persecutions were certainly not directed against religious faith, but solely and alone against the communism in which the upper three hundred justly beheld a great danger to themselves. It is true, however, that besides this, there were some other factors which made the first Christians feared as well as hated.

The main contingent of the first Christian congregations was, as stated above, the proletariat of the large cities. It required no great powers of persuasion to influence the thousands of beggars to let themselves be fed "like the lilies of the field." Even the lowest criminals were welcomed with open arms as "brothers." But the congregations needed money. It required abundant means to feed, clothe, and house the "brethren." It was desirable to persuade the wealthy, too, to join the brotherhood. This, however, was altogether a matter of religious propaganda. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and the foundation of a new kingdom, in which all the adherents of Christ were promised eternal salvation, could not fail of its effect. It was everywhere believed that the end of the world was in sight. Volcanic eruptions of *Ætna* and *Vesuvius* strengthened this superstition. Was it not natural that everyone, imbued with this belief, was ready to do anything to participate in this eternal salvation? But Christ had expressly said that it was easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven." Is it to be wondered at, then, if the wealthy, in great numbers, joined the new brotherhood, and agreed to give up their fortunes? With such zeal was this demand complied with, that many children of the wealthy became beggars, because their parents had given their all to the Church. But, the stronger grew the new brotherhood, the greater became the means which were set at its disposal, and the more congregations were formed



by the new doctrine, the greater, on the other hand, was the danger to the existing order of things, supposed to be contained in Christianity. Consequently, the attempt to exterminate it altogether was repeatedly made in the hope of thereby averting the danger with which the rich were threatened.

In contrast with the exclusiveness of the Jews, it was the character of the Christian doctrine to spread itself and to secure as many followers as possible on religious as well as practical grounds. Consequently, from the very beginning, Christianity was aggressive. While in ancient times a certain tolerance for the different forms of religion existed, one nation respecting the Gods of another, provided that one believed in the existence of Gods at all, the Christians immediately showed a deep contempt for everything outside of their own faith. Though Christianity was full of the most absurd superstitions, they not only ridiculed and derided the Romans' doctrine of the Gods, but also their entire art and science. The different "Apologies" of the first Fathers of the Church are full of such invectives, which naturally seriously offended the pride and honor of the Romans.

Educated people had long ago ceased to believe in the actual existence of the Gods. But in the place of the old doctrine of the Gods they had put philosophical ideas, which, as such, were at least free from all superstition. Now came the Fathers of the Church, with their aggressive writings, in which, on the one hand, they derided the old Gods, and on the other, proclaimed a no less absurd new superstition as the absolute truth. They did not spare the viewpoint of the educated class, who saw in their divine doctrine, as we do today, a symbolization of abstract ideas, or the poetical personification of various phenomena of Nature, but they, these "wise Christian Fathers," believed in the actual existence of the "heathen Gods," only they did not wish to recognize nor worship them as Gods. They looked upon them as devils and evil spirits, inimical to man.

In public places, in the presence of the masses, they carried on their well-known exorcisms. Those supposed to

be possessed of the devil were, naturally, hysterical or insane persons, or epileptics, who during the ceremonies of driving out the devil screamed and bellowed at the top of their voices, and acted as though their speech was that of the devil who had entered into them. This devil then admitted that he was one of the old Gods who unjustly had accepted the sacrifices and worship of the people.

These exorcisms of the devil were the greatest triumph of the Christian Church and were given as proof of the absolute truth of its doctrine in all the apologies of the Fathers of the Church, as, for example, that of Tertullian, Apollo and the Muses were spirits of hell. Homer and Virgil were servants of hell and the devil.

With incredible naïvete and arrogance, they looked down contemptuously on the doctrines of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. These "heathen," from whom "divine" truth had been withheld, could not have a clear conception of the world and life after death. The writings of Cicero, especially *Questiones*, *Tusculanae* and *De Senectute*, were despised and derided. If men like Cicero could speak to us today we would admire their intellectual attainments, their philosophical ideas which would by no means be inferior to our present scientific conceptions. But who were the first "Christians" to look down with contempt on these "heathen"? A pack of ignorant Jewish fishermen; people who had neither education nor breeding; men imbued with the most naïve, absurd, superstitions.

The unshakable faith in the divine kingdom of Heaven, in which all those who believed in Christ, were to find eternal salvation, while the "heathen," on the contrary, could expect only eternal damnation, gave the Christians that immeasurable self-glorification which has been maintained to the present day, and in consequence of which they look down with the utmost contempt on all those who do not share their faith.

They knew no limits in their contempt and derision for "unbelievers," and had not the slightest consideration for the views and feelings of others. In the following words Tertullian dared to insult his fellow-citizens as well as the

government. After rebuking and severely scoring theaters and public amusements, he says: "One spectacle still remains to be mentioned, and that is that eternal day of the Last Judgment, in which the people did not want to believe, which in fact, they have derided. What dimensions will this spectacle take? How astonished I shall be! How I will laugh! How I will rejoice! How I will shout when I hear so many kings, who, it was believed, would go to Heaven, together with Jupiter and all who believed in him, groaning in the deepest abyss of darkness. How all those rulers, who persecuted the name of the Lord, will writhe in the seething flames of hell, which rages more wildly against them than they themselves ever did against the Christians; how those wise philosophers, blushing before their own pupils, will be swallowed up by the flames, in company with these pupils whom they had tried to convince that God troubled himself about nothing on earth, whom they assured that there was, in fact, no soul or that the soul would not return to the body; how the famous poets will tremble before the throne of judgment, not of a Rhadamanthus or a Nicias, but of the denied Lord Christ. Then the tragedies will be played the more naturally, for they will shriek from actual pain which is being inflicted on them; then the actors will speak the more glowingly, for they will be devoured by the heat of the fire. Then the red garment of the charioteer will be enveloped in flames. Then the wrestlers will throw themselves about, not on the stage, but in the fire, it may be that even then I shall not care to see them, but will prefer to cast my insatiable glance on those who so zealously persecuted our Lord."<sup>170</sup>

This is the famous "Christian love" of the honest Father of the Church! These words, though, are in perfect accord with the imprecations of Christ, when he calls the Jewish priests and scribes a brood of serpents and "vipers," and informs them that they were going to writhe, "amidst howling and gnashing of teeth," in hell. But how could one expect that the Roman authorities would tolerate such invectives for any length of time?

<sup>170</sup>Tertullius De Spectaculis xxx.

This manner of showing the Romans their contempt, and ridiculing and deriding everything which for religious reasons or because of inherited traditions was sacred to the people, was the duty of every good Christian. It was a custom, handed down from generation to generation, to decorate the doors of houses with laurel wreathes and lanterns, and to dress the hair with garlands of fresh flowers, on certain holidays. In this innocent and certainly pretty custom the Christians saw dreadful levity, because the doors were under the protection of the house-gods, and they therefore refrained from taking part in the general custom. Those who allowed themselves to be persuaded to follow the orders of the authorities lived in terror of the revenge of the insulted Deity.

The whole life of the Christians was full of mysticism and superstition. They believed themselves persecuted everywhere by evil spirits; in the most ordinary phenomena of Nature they saw a sign from God for this or that action, or a prophecy of future events. They claimed to have frequent visions, in which God made known his will to them. Their diseases were cured in the most marvelous manner, and the resurrection of the dead was a frequent occurrence.

Since their religious belief had accepted the destruction of the world and the approach of an eternal heavenly kingdom as accomplished facts, all interest in the occurrences of the temporal world appeared to be gone. The Christians lived as in a dream, paying little or no attention to their surroundings, concentrating all their thoughts and desires on the blessings of the "heavenly kingdom." Consequently, all science, all art, every pleasure, seemed vain delusions to them. Anything that did not bear directly on the attainment of eternal salvation was looked upon with the greatest disfavor and contempt by the Fathers of the Church. The most innocent pleasure, even cheerfulness itself, was considered a sin. Wearing colored garments, enjoying music, the possession of silver and gold or any article of luxury, were strictly forbidden. To sleep on feather-pillows was a sin, Jacob having had only a stone for a head-rest.

One of the most essential factors of communism, in

whatever form it might appear, was the abolition of the family, particularly of matrimony. Therefore, we meet everywhere in history, whether theoretic contemplations or practical experiments at communism were made, the abolition of matrimony. This can be accomplished in two ways, either by making women and children common property, or by the complete forbidding of sexual intercourse. In his book "On the State," Plato chooses the first course. Plato's communism confined itself only to the ruling class. Since this class, in Plato's ideal state, did not produce, it required neither private property, nor family, and could therefore form a communism of consumption. The working and producing class, however, was to retain its old institutions. The before-mentioned sect of the Jews who favored communism, the Essenes, followed the latter course.

The zealous efforts of the Fathers of the Church to restrict sexual intercourse as much as possible, and to preach complete sexual abstinence as the highest ideal, were not only commanded by the communistic system of their congregation, but also by the religious convictions that led to asceticism. The tendency to abolish family life shows itself, among other things, in the institution of daily common meals, after the manner of the Spartans and of Plato's State. From a religious point of view, the Fathers found the motive for celibacy in the conclusion that only through the fall of Adam sexual intercourse had to be permitted as a necessary evil. Had Adam remained pure and sinless, mankind would ever have enjoyed a blessed life in paradise, and God would have found another, more innocent, means of proliferation. Therefore, a first marriage was "tolerated" by the Church fathers. To marry a second or a third time was equal to adultery, and was most severely punished.

Christ himself preached, of course only on the ground of his paranoical delusions of grandeur, the abolition of the family as the highest ideal of Christianity. He says: "And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall

inherit everlasting life."<sup>171</sup> St. Luke says: "Anyone who comes to me and hateth not father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, even unto his own life, he can not be my disciple."

The lack of interest felt by the Christians in the temporal world, inasmuch as all their thoughts and desires were bent on an imaginary future after death, naturally also made them indifferent towards all affairs of the state. They therefore refused to fill any offices or to contribute in any way to the common welfare. They acted on the principle that a true Christian could not occupy the position of a public officer, a soldier, or even a prince, without neglecting more important duties. Tertullian went so far as to publicly advise Christian soldiers to desert the army.<sup>172</sup>

Can one wonder that the Christians were hated and despised by their fellow-citizens? What would you think today of a continually growing community within the state which not only remained entirely indifferent to all public interests, but which, by its eccentricities, injured it in all possible ways?

Anyone who studies the history of Christianity impartially and without prejudice, must admit that it formed a tremendous menace to the existing state of affairs. A state within a state, such as is represented by Christianity, is always a social impossibility. Every normal person must recoil in horror from the cruelties perpetrated by the insane Nero, and stamp the atrocities he committed against the Christians as disgusting brutalities. But during the first three centuries there were also emperors who fully deserve the respect and esteem of posterity, and they, too, persecuted the Christians and used every means in their power in their attempts to exterminate Christianity completely. Of those so-called ten persecutions of the Christians, several took place during the reign of the best emperors, like Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, of whom one must certainly admit that they acted according to the best of their knowledge and ability.

Most historians describe these persecutions of the Chris-

<sup>171</sup>Matt. xix : 29.

<sup>172</sup>Tertullian, *De Corona Nuli* ix.

tians as a pure religious fanaticism. According to them, the Christians were persecuted because they refused to show the old Gods the customary honors. The children at school are taught to believe that the only crime of the "poor innocent Christians" consisted in their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, their Redeemer, and that their steadfast refusal to deny their "Savior" brought upon them a frightful death under the most atrocious torture.

This is a direct perversion of facts. In the great Roman Empire there were many different religions, and not one of the many peoples who followed them was persecuted because of its religion. On the contrary, in this respect there was great tolerance. Even the Jews, who for other reasons could not boast of being any too popular, were never hindered in the free observance of their religion. The enmities against the Christians, and the many attempts to exterminate Christianity completely, were occasioned by political and social conditions, not because of their religion. This should be clearly understood, once and for all time, if one does not wish intentionally to pervert history and undermine the truth.

If one considers the Christians of the first centuries entirely apart from their religion, one will find that their agitations, their aggressive conduct against the propertied class, their open enmities, their ridicule and derision of things sacred to the people, were such that if a community following such tendencies existed within the state today, we would interfere with the same severity, if not the same brutality.

Do we not attempt to suppress communistic, nay, even social-democratic movements within the modern states by all possible means? What would we say today in our modern states of a brotherhood, steadily growing in power and extent, consisting of the lowest class of the population, proclaiming absolute social equality their highest ideal, considering themselves justified in asking of every well-to-do man that he share his fortune with them, and placing themselves on a basis of absolute equality with even the highest authorities of the state?

One of the chief demands of early Christianity was the abolition of slavery. Of course! Had not the Savior been sent to all mankind? If all men were to be brethren, how could there be slaves? But how can you reconcile with this the fact that in the thoroughly Christian United States of America one of the bloodiest wars of all times was waged a half century ago because half of this Christian country insisted on the maintenance of slavery as a divine right? In the Roman Empire, the sudden abolition of slavery would have meant the complete overthrow of the entire propertied class, and thereby the ruin of the entire country. But what cared those early Christians for the preservation of the state? They were expecting the end of the world and the beginning of the eternal Kingdom of Christ. What did they care for the Roman Empire?

Implicit faith in these promises made the masses not only indifferent to the affairs of the world, but also indifferent to physical suffering and bodily pain. Consequently, the many martyrs preferred enduring the cruelest tortures to gaining their freedom by one word of renunciation. The frequent utterances of Christ, in which he assures his disciples that for all that they suffered for him on earth they would be rewarded a thousandfold in the other world, induced any number of fanatics to seek death by torture and at the stake, and to suffer the most excruciating agonies with smiling faces. The "heroism" of these martyrs gained innumerable adherents for Christianity and acted as its greatest propaganda, so that the very opposite of that which was intended by all these severe measures was, in fact, attained.

The objective critic today will have to admit that the Roman emperors justly recognized a very grave danger to the preservation of the empire in the steadily growing Christianity; he will, furthermore, have to admit, that in the efforts to suppress Christianity, religious faith was not for a moment in question, but that, as a fact, the slowly but surely developing revolution of a communistic community had to be dealt with, a revolution that had already spread throughout the entire empire, and the object of which was



nothing less than the complete overthrow of the existing order of things.

This is the reason why the Roman government tried in all possible ways, during the first three centuries, to destroy this internal foe of the empire. No doubt, the methods employed often were cruel and abominable. But, on the other hand, there were emperors who with kind and diplomatic measures, tried to accomplish the same end. This explains the many apparent contradictions between the actions of many of the emperors, in reference to this, and the rest of their characters. In his capacity as Proconsul, the younger Pliny writes to Emperor Trajan, asking him for instructions, as to how he should conduct himself toward the many people who were accused before his tribunal of Christianity.<sup>173</sup> Obviously, in his written answer, the emperor tries to take a middle course, on the one hand not wishing to persecute the already widespread Christians too severely, and on the other, trying to prevent their further propagation.

That an emperor like Caracalla cared little to what religion the many subjugated nations belonged, that, in fact, he was interested only in procuring vast new sums of money wherewith to satisfy his eccentricities and debaucheries, is shown sufficiently by the one fact that he allowed the right of Roman citizenship to be sold without regard to creed in all provinces of the empire, while his predecessors had always given the same as a mark of especial merit. Had the emperors really been in earnest in the matter of maintaining the worship of the old Gods, this very bestowing or denying of citizenship would have given them a valuable means for this purpose..

All historians regard the cruel persecutions of the Christians under the otherwise noble, brave, magnanimous, and even tender-hearted Marcus Aurelius as a most inexplicable psychological contradiction. When the governor, Avidius Cassius, was instigated by the faithless wife of the emperor to revolt, and, after the conquest of all Asia Minor, had been assassinated by his own soldiers, the emperor,

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<sup>173</sup>Pliny x: 97.

hurrying to the scene from afar, bewailed his fate in having been robbed of the pleasure of pardoning a man who had betrayed him. With similar clemency he treated all the revolutionary provinces. Everywhere he was loved and respected for his loyalty and justness. And this emperor contrived one of the most violent persecutions of the Christians. John Stuart Mill, who can not highly enough praise the virtues of Marcus Aurelius, says of him that his only weakness lay in his great gentleness. He calls him "a better Christian in all but the dogmatic sense of the word, than almost any of the ostensibly Christian sovereigns who have since reigned." That such an emperor, a man of so high and noble a turn of mind, "could have gone so far wrong as to allow the Christians to be most cruelly persecuted," John Stuart Mill says is "one of the most tragical facts in all history."

What is actually tragic in this story is not Marcus Aurelius' conduct, but the intentional, or unintentional, perversion of facts by the historians. Just these severe measures which Marcus Aurelius saw himself compelled to employ against Christianity prove the absolute truth of our previous remarks. Who can believe for an instant that a man like Marcus Aurelius would have persecuted thousands of human beings in a most frightful manner, merely because of their religious faith; he who was himself a philosophical free-thinker, he who, in Athens, established chairs of the four main sects of philosophy, the Platonists, the Stoics, the Peripatetics and the Epicureans; he whose own writings are full of humane thoughts and philosophical wisdom?

What Marcus Aurelius tried to suppress was not a harmless religious sect, but a conspiracy against the empire, a communistic revolution, a social nihilism. How could he, the ingenious general, who hurried from one end of the empire to the other to ward off the approaching enemy, act differently towards a confederation of people, whose leaders openly advised them to desert from the army? How would Napoleon, how George Washington have acted in an analogous situation? No, his persecutions

were not directed against the worshipers of Christ, but just as, sword in hand, he attacked the enemies of Rome on the battlefield, so now by strong measures and restriction he tried to free the empire from the foe within its doors.

But all, even the most inhuman and brutal persecutions of the Christians remained without success. No measures, be they those of brute force, or the finest seductions of diplomatic art, were able to stem the steadily increasing tide of Christianity. All measures directed against it had the opposite effect. Instead of exterminating the followers of the Christian faith, these grew ever more numerous. Christianity grew to be an irresistible power, until finally the great moment arrived when Christianity carried off the victory over the old "heathen" doctrine of the Gods, and in a short time became the recognized religion of all the civilized nations of the earth.

It is this "victory" of which mankind is so proud, which historians depict in the most glowing colors. "Divine truth," it usually says, "had to conquer, no matter what were the obstacles in its way." To fully appreciate this "victory," we must first of all cast a glance on the degree of development which Christianity had reached at that important epoch.

The main principle of early Christianity was the before described equality and fraternity. Nobody was allowed to consume more of his income than his fellowmen. Whatever he did not require for his own support he was obliged to give to the bishop of the congregation for distribution. Consequently, there were neither rich nor poor. All Christians were equals, and considered themselves brothers. The head of the congregation, the bishop, was chosen by the people, but had no more privileges than any other brother of the congregation. He merely had to perform the administrative duties, just as the president chosen by the members of any organization. There was no particular priesthood. Every brother had the right to speak at the meetings. Their meeting-houses were of the simplest nature. After some part of the Scriptures had been read, the bishop, or some one who felt himself able to do so, made

a short address to the brothers. Then, after a brief silent prayer, they gave one another a brotherly kiss and the bishop distributed the Holy Sacrament among them. It is this communistic equality and fraternity which lies at the bottom of the much-praised Christian love.

It required extraordinary enthusiasm to maintain this communistic equality in the consumption of the necessities of life. It was certainly not easy to find a sufficient number of wealthy people who were ready not only to share their property with their "brethren," but also to provide a permanent income for them. Nevertheless, sufficient means were procured to support the first Christian congregations on this principle, at least for some time. But that such a system, dependent on artificially engendered enthusiasm, could not be maintained permanently can readily be understood. The very necessity to produce had the effect of bringing care for the family once more into the foreground. The common meals were gradually limited to special festivities, until finally they were reduced to public feeding of the poor, as heretofore. While at first the entire income was surrendered to the congregation, to be distributed among them by the bishop, in time the people began to feel obliged only to give what exceeded their own needs. The difference between rich and poor again became more and more apparent, while equality and fraternity continued to exist in theory only.

That under such circumstances brotherly love was frequently changed into quarrels, and Christian love turned to hatred, has its cause in human nature. People accused one another of breaking the fundamental laws of Christianity. Every one accused the other of acting contrary to the doctrines and precepts of Christ, and thus many schisms occurred, even during the first centuries, in the Christian Church. Sects condemning and fighting one another grew ever more numerous. According to the records of Irenæus and Epiphanius the Gnostics alone split into more than fifty different sects, the best known of which being the Basilidians, the Valentinians, the Marcionites and the Manichaeans.

In spite of all this, the communistic principle was maintained, at least theoretically, for a comparatively long time. Again and again the Fathers of the Church sent forth their warning voices, exhorting the people to put an end to personal wealth and inequality, and to give everything to the congregation, as dictated by the principles of Christianity. "Ye miserable creatures," St. Basilus says to the wealthy, "how will you answer to the eternal judge?—Ye answer me, 'Wherein am I wrong, since I keep only what belongs to me?' But I ask you, what do you call your own? From whom have ye received it? Ye act like a man in a theater, who hurries to engage all the seats so as to prevent others from entering, keeping for his own use what is intended for all. How do the rich become rich, except by taking possession of things that belong to all? If every one took for himself only what was needed for his support, and left the rest for the others, there would be neither rich nor poor."

Such exhortations published in great numbers by the Fathers of the Church are instructive in two different respects. They show, firstly, how difficult it was to maintain the communistic principle in the early Christian congregations. Secondly, they unquestionably give evidence of the great economic danger to the maintenance of the state that lay in Christianity. We can only ask again and again: How would we act today, towards such communistic agitations against the propertied class?

In spite of all the efforts and exhortations of the Fathers of the church, the wealthy, as was to be expected, could not in the long run be induced to give up their property. They confined themselves to making contributions for the support of the poor. By this the fundamental props of Christianity would have been shattered, and it would certainly have gone to pieces, had not at the right time a wonderful remedy been invented, that was destined to help Christianity over the most difficult obstacles in all future times. Until now the communistic principle of brotherly equality, on which the ideal of "Christian love" was based, was the true foundation of Christianity, in religion as well as in political

considerations. The voluntary surrender of all personal property was directly commanded by Christ. Whoever wanted to follow him was obliged to sell his goods and chattels and give the proceeds to the poor. Personal property, until now, was incompatible with the doctrine of Christ. Practically, Christianity owed its external success, its extension over the entire civilized world of that time, to the propagation of the principle of communism. It was, as the reader will recall, the great mass of the ragamuffin proletariat, the *plebs urbana*, which formed the main contingent of the early Christian congregations. Without the equal distribution of all means of existence, Christianity would never have attained recognition and influence. Equality and fraternity were, therefore, as has been said, the fundamental basis of Christianity.

This foundation had now collapsed. The wealthy refused decidedly to permanently give up their property. The poor were dependent now, as before, on the charity of the rich. The much-praised Christian love existed only in theory. To save Christianity from inevitable destruction, that wonderful remedy that was to overcome all difficulties in future times, now was resorted to. The old inconvenient principles of Christianity were dropped and were re-made to fit present conditions, by "turning," "interpreting" and "explaining" the words of Christ, by attributing to them "symbolic meanings," such as the temporary conditions required them to possess.

With the same zeal with which the Fathers of the Church had preached communism, they now began to justify personal property as a necessary institution. What Christ "meant" when he ordered the Disciples to give their possessions to the poor, was not that they give material possessions, but the treasures of their hearts. The rich man shall divorce his heart from all earthly possessions, he shall be humble and modest, not proud nor haughty. He shall use his fortune to do good and help the poor as much as he can. But the poor, too, must be humble. They shall not strive to possess wealth any more than shall the rich and they must learn to be satisfied with their lot.

But since it was of the greatest importance to keep the masses of the proletariat, which had been cheated by Christianity, in a good humor, they were consoled with promises of the "other world." Instead of providing them with food, shelter, and clothing, as heretofore, they were given a preferred claim on the imminent kingdom of God, where they were to have the very best seats. For had not the Lord, Jesus Christ, said: "The last shall be first?" The poor rich were shown the greatest pity, for they could never be saved; sooner "could a camel pass through a needle's eye." As it seemed desirable, the "symbolic meaning" was adopted or ignored, and it was found that Christianity was a most convenient institution for all possible eventualities of life.

Just as equality and fraternity, in respect to property, could not be maintained, so it was with the different class distinctions. The same class differences remained, and in spite of all doctrines of equality, Christianity was unable to effect any radical change therein. Even within the Christian congregations, equality and fraternity remained only theoretical ideas. But, not satisfied with this, Christianity formed within its own limits, a new caste, whose class differences and pride of caste were to surpass everything, which Christianity at its beginning had characterized and fought against as unchristian and "heathenish."

In the beginning of their existence, the various Christian congregations had officers who had to perform certain duties, such as the distribution of property among the brethren; but of a real priesthood, there could be no question. In religious matters, all the brethren were equals. All Christians were priests of God. As Christ had chosen his Apostles from the dregs of the people, so the people itself should praise and worship the name of the Savior, but they should not be dependent on a priesthood intermediary between God and men. Where such a barrier existed, as among the Jews, or in the ritual of the old Gods, it was vehemently attacked by the Christians. The officers of the first congregations were chosen by the people from their own circle, and owed them an accounting. They derived no benefits from their offices, which they looked upon as honor-

ary positions, while at the same time they continued their other employment.

These conditions changed perceptibly in the course of time. A priesthood was formed, which became the ruling class, the clergy, of Christianity, to whom the people, the laity, were subservient. The Church, which formerly had received the gifts of the wealthy, only to distribute them equally among the members of the congregation, now began to found a fortune of its own. Out of honorary officers grew a paid priesthood, which steadily increased in power and wealth. Instead of, as formerly, performing only business duties, the clergy now assumed the sole right of religious knowledge and ceremonial observances. More and more, the laity were prevented from direct participation in religious matters, until they were finally forbidden even to read the "Holy Scriptures," and the priesthood became the absolute intermediary between the people and the object of their religious worship. While, formerly, meetings had been held in humble places, void of all luxury or splendor, for the purpose of common edification, and to receive the Holy Sacrament, there were now erected those enormous, magnificent edifices, which cost immense sums of money and were by no means surpassed in splendor and magnificence by those imposing temples of the old "heathen."

Every bishop had control of the income of his congregation, and could use it at his discretion. This, of course, gave him a tremendous power, which increased in the ratio of the growth of the wealth of his church. And, on the other hand, this position of power gave him the right to increase the tax on the wealthy, since his influence over them, too, was unlimited. Through the newly founded discipline of the Church, with its innumerable penalties and punishments, the severest of which was excommunication, the bishops occupied a position of power not less potent than that of the Czar. The many different duties which the administration of the church property and the observance of divine services required, led to the formation of many new positions and church offices, so that the priesthood had become a regular career, with a systematic advancement,



a condition which considerably increased the authority of the clergy as a special caste.

Many young men were induced to devote themselves to the priesthood, dazzled by the prospects of a brilliant career. The army had long since fallen into decline and discredit, since it was made up of hired foreigners; the political career had degenerated with political life, the state's administration found itself in a state of decadence; art and science offered little opportunity for personal advancement. But in the career of the Christian clergy, every juvenile ambition found ample gratification. It was easier to obtain power and authority there than anywhere else.

Simultaneously with this change in the general Christian affairs, the individual congregations, which heretofore had been entirely independent, began to enter into closer touch with one another. The leaders of the Christian congregations, henceforth striving for power as their highest ideal, began to realize that their authority over the people, as well as over the government of the state, lay in a combination of all Christian congregations. Just as the smaller congregations in the country, as a rule, were subordinate to the bishop of the nearest large city, so the churches of the various cities in their turn formed one great congregation, at whose head stood the bishop of the capital or metropolis, who consequently received the title of Metropolitan or Archbishop. If the power of the individual congregations was lessened thereby, the position of the bishops became the more independent of his brethren in the congregation. Finally it came to a union of all the Christian congregations under one management, whose first synod took place in Nicaea in 325. The management at first consisted of the archbishops of the largest and richest congregations, until finally all Christian affairs were laid before the bishop of Rome.

And what became of the people? What became of the brethren? What became of Christian love? "Damn the public," said a great American after he had risen to independent wealth and influence. "Damn the people" thought

these metropolitan gentlemen and bishops, as they sat on their thrones and reveled in wealth and luxury. How far must things have gone, in this respect, if, in the fifth century, the following arrangement had to be made for the protection of the public! The entire income of the Church was to be divided into four equal parts; one part to belong to the bishop, one part to the remaining ecclesiastics of the congregation; one part to be used to defray the expenses of the congregation, and one part to go to the poor. All the "brethren" together, therefore, received as much as one bishop, and this arrangement was made for the protection of the public. What a wonderful thing is "Christian love!"

At the expiration of the first three centuries, Christianity certainly presented a very different aspect from what it did at that time when the "brothers" of the first Christian congregations came together for common worship, and separated with a "brotherly kiss." Equality and fraternity were a long-forgotten dream. The proletariat was in exactly the same condition as it was before Christianity had emptied its brotherly horn of plenty over it. As it had been before, so it became now again dependent on the charity of the rich. Rights it had none. It was the proletariat that had helped, more than any other class, to build up Christianity. Now that the great edifice was erected, they were given their dismissal.

The menace that Christianity had once been to the propertied class, and therefore to the preservation of society, was a thing of the past. No one now thought of communistic principles. Christian communism was dead and buried. What the most cruel persecutions during three centuries failed to accomplish, what the diplomatic arts of the greatest statesmen could not bring about, the Christians themselves did—that is, the priests, the bishops, and the metropolitans. They conquered the threatening Hydra of a revolutionary communism, they overcame the danger which for three centuries had threatened the wealthy class and thereby society. But—what was the price demanded by the conqueror for the victory which only he had been able to attain? Christianity was not demolished by this victory.

On the contrary, it was more powerful and flourishing than ever before. An aristocratic clergy had taken the place of the communistic rabble. Instead of the danger which threatened the throne from below, from a proletariat striving for equality and fraternity, a new power had arisen, which, by its enormous influence over the masses, as well as by its fabulous wealth, represented a new and obviously far greater danger. Christianity had now become a state within the state, an organization which extended all over the world and had unlimited means at its disposal. The struggle for power was the mainspring of this well-organized hierarchy, from the bishop of Rome down to the simple chaplain of a village church. No other career in the entire empire offered such chances to ambitious youths as did that of the Christian clergy.

The government fully recognized, indeed, what an enormous danger lay dormant in this well-organized power. What was to prevent the bishop of Rome from making himself some day the temporal ruler of the empire? His power was steadily increasing, while that of the emperor was falling away. How could the emperor hope to conquer this internal foe, when his predecessors had for centuries struggled against it in vain, under far less unfavorable conditions? Even though for the time being, the strength of Christianity was not yet great enough for such an undertaking, who could tell what the future might have in store in this respect? But where internal struggles of any sort arose, where the throne of the emperor was endangered by rivals and the empire was divided into different parties, the tremendous power of Christianity would turn the scale even then.

This was the condition of affairs when at the beginning of the fourth century, Constantine, after having been proclaimed emperor in Britannia, by his troops, attempted to make himself sole monarch of the empire. There were no less than five Augustuses besides himself, who all aimed at the same goal, that is Galerius, Maximinus, Maximinianus, Maxentius, and Licinius. Each one of these considered himself the only one justified in his claims, and the coun-

try was threatened with a devastating civil war. Of course, each one had to try to make himself popular with the people and to gather as large a following as possible. Christianity was, as has been said, an important power, as well in warriors as in material wealth. Under Diocletian and his fellow-emperors the so-called "tenth" persecution of the Christians had taken place, which Eusebius described as the most cruel of all. This was the last attempt to forcibly suppress this power, so hostile to the state. This attempt, as in the previous three centuries, having proved fruitless, one aspirant resorted to tactics which can be observed quite often even in ordinary life. A man who is struggling for success is antagonized and kept down by those who have reached the heights, fearing his dangerous competition. If, however, he does not succumb, but remains valiant and successful, in spite of them, winning power and esteem, the tables are soon turned. Everyone endeavors to establish friendly relations with him and gain his good will. Former enemies become apparent friends, all hoping to profit by his influential position.

In just this way the emperors acted towards the Christians. "Those very persons," says Eusebius, "who were formerly the principal agents of the persecutions, most remarkably changed in their sentiments, began to recant, and attempted to extinguish the blaze of persecution kindled against us, by mild proclamations and ordinances."<sup>174</sup>

Every one of those in power began to flirt with the high dignitaries of the Christian Church; for they all realized that that party which could win the Christians over to its side would be victorious.

When in 312 Constantine was on his way to Rome, to try and defeat one of his opponents, Maxentius, according to Eusebius he is said to have seen the sign of a burning cross against the sky, bearing the inscription: *In hoc signo vinces*—By this you will conquer. During the following night Christ is said to have appeared to him, and to have directed him to have the sign that he had seen outlined against the sky, sewed to his banner, so as to carry it

<sup>174</sup>Eusebius 1 xiii c: 16.

before his troops during the attack on the enemy. This is the origin of the famous banner with the cross—*Labarum*—of which Christian leaders from that time forth made use in time of war. The leaning cross X is at the same time the initial letter of the Greek word for Christ.

Contemporaneous Christian historians tried to make as much capital as possible out of this occurrence. Constantine has been compared to Paul, who likewise was changed from a fanatical persecutor into an enthusiastic follower of the Savior, by the appearance of Christ.

Whether Constantine invented this fairy-tale himself, or whether it is the product of the imagination of the priests, cannot today be definitely decided, and is, in fact, altogether immaterial. Constantine was not a paranoiac; he had no hallucinations; he was a man of great abilities, to whom, however, nothing in the world was sacred, and who stopped at nothing, not even at the most revolting crimes, to accomplish his purpose. He did not belong to that type of men to whom the "Messiahs" made their "appearance." But the story is cleverly planned, and has, no matter whence its origin, entirely fulfilled its purpose. Maxentius, with his entire army, was overpowered, and Constantine became the hero of Christianity.

A greater irony of fate cannot be imagined. If at least a man like Marcus Aurelius had become the hero of Christianity—but—this monster, a man convicted of every imaginable crime! He introduced Christianity only for utilitarian purposes. But the Christians dared not admit this, else Christianity would have lost its chief halo. They therefore had to idealize their hero and make a saint of a criminal. The Church can do everything, and so it accomplished this. "His conversion" was accomplished like Paul's by the personal appearance of Christ, and the rest of his life was devoted to "divine truth and the glory of Jesus Christ."

History distinguished him as only a very few select men, by conferring on him the title "the great." Of course, men like Alexander the Great, Charles the Great, and Frederick

the Great would hardly be proud of their title if they realized with whom they had to share the distinction.

He celebrated his first victory, as Emperor, over the Franks and Alemannen, by having the commanders of the enemy thrown to the wild beasts in the circus at Trier. Maximianus, who fled to him for protection, was, by his orders, put to death. In like manner Licinius was executed, in spite of the fact that he had given his word of honor not to harm him. His own highly gifted and generally beloved son Crispus, he caused to be executed on the unproven accusation of his step-mother; while at the same time his eleven-year-old nephew, the son of Licinius, was put to death at his command. After convincing himself of the innocence of his son Crispus, he had his wife, Fausta, the step-mother of Crispus, put to death. Such is the celebrated "Christian Love!" Such is the hero of Christianity, whom historians have given the title "the great"!

By nature, Constantine was highly gifted. He is described as a man of great size and stately figure. His mental qualities were in many respects remarkable, rendering his disloyalty and cruelty the more detestable.

After becoming, through his various victories over his rivals, sole ruler of the empire, he set himself the task of reorganizing the state in such a manner that the power of the emperor was enhanced and the tottering throne made secure. He desired above all to completely destroy the last trace of that republican spirit which still had been preserved during those first three centuries. In Rome, the magnificent edifices of the Forum Romanum could not fail to remind the people, even if only as a mute witness, of the erstwhile Roman freedom, of the glorious period of the old Roman Republic.

He therefore decided to remove the capital from Rome to Byzantium, which, by expending enormous sums of money, he changed into a new metropolis, to which he gave the name Roma Nova. Later, in his honor, it was called Constantinople, a name retained to the present day.

The main principle of the new system was to organize all classes and professions in such a manner that they

formed an uninterrupted step-ladder, the highest rungs of which leaned against the throne, thereby becoming directly dependent upon it. In the place of personal liberty and self-reliance of thought and act, as had been customary among the Roman citizens, a system of the strictest subordination of a well-organized bureaucracy arose. Just as the residence of the imperial court was removed from the dignified metropolis of the West to the capital of the East, abounding in the most magnificent oriental edifices, there arose, in place of the simple usages and customs which still breathed the solid republican spirit, the dazzling pomp and extravagance of the oriental machinery of state.

From the lowest slave up to the imperial minister of state, every one had his rank and title. No one was so low as not to take a certain pride in some honor bestowed on him; no one so high that he did not strive to reach the step he saw above him. Every degree of rank was defined with the most scrupulous care, and found in a lot of ceremonious distinctions the expression of its dignity. The study and observation of all these ceremonies was an important duty; to neglect them or offend against them was a crime. Even the manner of address for every rank consisted of the most peculiar and absurd formalities. The many foolish decorations and titles in the modern European countries are the remains of this oriental rubbish.

But all these things were by no means empty prattle. They were, in fact, necessary to support the throne and lend security to its power. In a country where no one has anything to lose, the throne naturally rests on a shaky foundation. If, on the contrary, everyone has something to lose, it is to the interest of everybody to prevent a revolution and to support the government. It was this that Constantine strove to attain, and that he accomplished completely.

That subtle organization, such as Constantine constructed in the various branches of the machinery of state, always had its prototype in Christianity. The clergy had organized itself into strictly disciplined degrees of rank. Since Diocletian, the attempt to forcibly destroy this enormous power

had been given up forever. From now on the one striving for supreme power could have but the one aim, namely, to put himself at the head of this organization, thereby getting the entire control of it into his own hands. This, however, was not so easy. The bishops were not inclined to let the power obtained with such difficulty slip out of their fingers. But, on the other hand, they realized that for them, too, it would be better to go hand in hand with the government than to oppose it. Thus originated that relationship between the Church and the State, which lent supremacy now to the one, now to the other, the mutual jealousy continuing to exist up to the present day. And the people? And "Christian love"? Let us forget them!

After Constantine, in the year 312, saw the flaming cross against the sky, and Christ in his own person had appeared to him, and after, with the help and support of Christ, he had defeated his main opponent, Maxentius, in open battle, you would suppose that in gratitude and recognition of the divine truth he would at once have gone over to Christianity. Yes, indeed! That is what he would have done, if he himself had considered the story of the flaming cross and Christ as actual truth; or, in other words, if he, like Paul, had been a paranoiac, suffering from delusions and hallucinations. But since this little tale was only a strategic trick on the part of the sly emperor, his decisions were dictated by other motives. The time had not yet come to make Christianity the religion of the country. For this, the following of the old doctrine of the Gods was still too numerous. As to the religions themselves, Constantine cared as little about the one as about the other. It was all the same to him whether the people prayed to the old Gods and sacrificed to the statues of the emperors, or whether they worshiped an insane Jew and prated about the divine "Savior." To him, the only thing that mattered was that he be supported by all parties. The question was not that he adopt Christianity, but that Christianity adopt him.

Like all other emperors since Augustus, Constantine was Pontifex Maximus of the Roman state-religion. He now aimed at occupying a similar position in Christianity.



He therefore put himself in personal communication with the bishops and showed a lively interest in all the affairs of the Church. Although the formality of electing the bishops was still maintained, he made his influence felt in these elections to such an extent that the filling of many important positions came very close to being appointments by the emperor. He had a number of Christian churches erected and furnished them magnificently. After his decisive victory over Licinius, he assigned them a regular income from the public coffers. One of the most important ordinances made by the emperor for the benefit of the Church, was the permission to accept legacies and therefore also to own property. From this time on the fortunes of the clergy, especially their real estate, increased with great rapidity. Constantine granted the right to the clergy to submit to their own special jurisdiction and also to administer justice in the name of the Church, in cases that were voluntarily brought before them.

The emperor also took part in the inner dogmatic affairs of the Church, and seemed to take the greatest interest in them. When a violent dispute arose in the Alexandrian church, between Bishop Alexander and the presbyter Arius, a dispute which soon grew to such dimensions that it threatened to disrupt the Church, the emperor tried by personal interference to put an end to the matter. But when all his efforts proved in vain, both parties clinging stubbornly to their own opinions, Constantine called a meeting of all the bishops of the empire at Nicaea, to have the quarrel decided by the assembled clergy. This was the first so-called council of the Church, like which so many followed in later years. The emperor himself was present at the council and took the liveliest interest in the proceedings, over which he well knew how to exercise great influence.

Constantine did all this without himself becoming a Christian. He was still Pontifex Maximus and therefore had the supreme management of the "heathenish" divine service. This clearly shows, without the possibility of doubt, that Constantine did all this for purely diplomatic reasons, and that religious faith was with him nothing but a cloak for

his designs. It is therefore a matter of the most naïve ignorance or of intentional perversion of facts, when modern historians persist in saying that Constantine "was continually strengthened in his faith in the truth and divinity of Christianity." Constantine never was converted to Christianity, even though historians claim that he received the "Holy Sacrament" on his deathbed. As if it made any difference if one sprinkled a dying man with a few drops of water and calls him a Christian! He probably knew nothing at all about it, this being in all likelihood a high-handed procedure on the part of the priests. The fact is that not only Constantine himself, so long as he lived, but all his successors up to Gratian, remained Pontifex Maximus.

Not through "faith in the divine truth," but through the stress of circumstances, as has been demonstrated, Constantine and his successors arrived at the conclusion that after having gone so far, it was to the best interest of the throne to make Christianity the general, even the only, religion of the empire. Christianity could no longer be suppressed and it therefore became necessary to swim with the tide instead of against it. But to maintain the dual situation between the two religions, on one hand to be the Pontifex Maximus of the "heathen" religion, and on the other to pose as the protector and promotor of Christianity, was an impossibility.

In the year 312 Constantine began to have the sign of the cross, the Labarum, carried at the head of his troops, in battle, so that "by their faith in Jesus Christ" his army might be victorious over the "heathens" whose religious leadership was also in his hands. After having spent twelve years in trying to secure general recognition for Christianity, he made it, in the year 324, the religion of the state, without, however, personally joining it; for, according to the constitution, he still had to remain Pontifex Maximus.

Only a man like Constantine, who suffered no twinges of conscience, could steer clear of danger in such a double role. But it also required a particularly servile and contemptible priesthood who would allow a man not of their

own faith but at the head of a "heathen" religion, to have the deciding voice in the most important affairs of their religion, such as the dispute between Alexander and Arius, in which the divinity of Christ was the point at issue.

After Christianity had begun to be proclaimed the only true religion, rapid strides were made in its progress. For after all, there was no one who had an interest in opposing this change. The persecutions of the Christians had never taken place because of religious reasons; they were always started by the government, never by the people. Now, after "Christianity" had become the very opposite of what it was originally, the government took the part of the Christians—who, then, could have an interest in protesting? The educated classes, who had occupied themselves with philosophy, who were either Stoics or Epicureans, did not care whether Jupiter or Christ sat on the throne. The priests saw a better career before them in the Christian Church than was to be found in the temples of the old Gods. And the people? Nothing was easier than to send the people to church instead of to the temples. What did the great mass of the people know of one religion or another? The only things sacred to the people are the ceremonies and traditions inherited from generation to generation. The holidays celebrated in the paternal homes which make a deep impression on youthful emotions, are precious and dear to the people and are only reluctantly given up. It is not the Deity as such about which the people care, but the ways and means, with which he is worshiped and celebrated.

To overcome these difficulties, a very simple, but, consequently, more potent measure was adopted. The outer shell, dear to the people, was retained; only the inner kernel was changed, for which the people cared little, which it even did not know. What mattered it to the people whether it worshiped Jupiter or Christ? The churches had been built in imitation of the temples; frequently, as can still be seen in Rome, "heathen temples" were turned into churches. The priests wore vestments as magnificent or even more costly than heretofore. The altars of the old Gods at which the masses were wont to kneel, stood there as they

always did, and at them the people worshiped as they had been accustomed to from olden times.

Then, however, a difficulty manifested itself. On the altars were erected the various images of the Gods. This was the temple of Apollo, that of Diana. On this altar was the image of beautiful Venus, on that, one of Mars. These picturesque representations of Polytheism were heartily cherished by the people. Henceforth, to confine them to the sole image of Christ must have seemed very hard to them. The doctrine of an only God was familiar to them through the Jews, but was not at all popular. Especially the female Deities would have been missed keenly by the people. What was there to be done? Was there anybody in Jehovah's family to answer the purpose? No, he had but the one son. What a pity, daughters he had not at all. Not even a mother, or a mother-in-law! This was really a calamity. Brains were cudgeled, until finally some one hit upon the idea of making a goddess of the mother of Jesus. Certainly! Why not? If Christ be a God, his mother must have been a Goddess. Great! The Jewish old lady was endowed with the title: "Mary, Mother of God." This fitted in excellently. The people were given an equivalent for their beloved Isis, who likewise called herself "the mother of Gods." Madame Isis had, as you know, her origin in Egypt, and came to Italy during the time of Sulla. But she was several times banished from Rome because of her indecent behavior. Still, the people loved the old lady, and always got her back again. She was banished from Rome the last time by Augustus, but returned again under Vespasian, and from then on enjoyed the particular favor of the people. Now Mother Mary took her place, and was worshipped, as formerly Isis had been, by processions and donations.

But, with all due respect for Jesus and his good mother, these two alone would not do at all. It was impossible for them to take the place of all the Gods. The people were accustomed to much more, and would hardly be satisfied with one bachelor and his old mother. This was a difficult problem, indeed. What was needed were new Gods—equiva-

lents for Apollo, Diana, Mars and Minerva; equivalents for the many household Gods to whom the people were accustomed. Where were new Gods to be found who were on friendly terms with Jehovah, Christ, the Holy Ghost, and Mary? This was indeed no easy matter, and gave the learned gentlemen much cause for worriment. At last, however, they did find a way out of this dilemma. For a time the many martyrs who suffered so heroically for their Lord Jesus Christ had been the recipients of special honors. Churches had been built in their name; they had been interred within the church and costly monuments had been erected over their tombs. Now it was decided to advance them to a state of divinity. Had not Christ said frequently that those who suffered death for him were to be especially rewarded in the kingdom of God? The martyrs, therefore, were now made "saints," and occupied places on the steps of the heavenly throne, where they were to act as mediators between Christ and mankind. This removed all difficulties. Now, images could be erected at will. Here was holy Joseph, there holy Magdalen. Just as the empire was strictly disciplined and organized, so the kingdom of heaven henceforth possessed a most complicated organization. At the head, of course, stood the divine family, Jehovah, Christ with his Mother, and the Holy Ghost. They were served by a host of angels. In this the Christian Deities had a great advantage over those of the old Olympus. The latter had to be satisfied with one divine messenger, Hermes. It is true, there was young Ganymede, but he confined himself to filling the cup of Jupiter, but the Christian angels had to perform all sorts of duties. To them was added the great army of saints, who were endowed with the position of mediator between mankind and the Deity. These, too, had many advantages over the many subordinate divinities of the old "heathen." Above all, it was characteristic of the noble spirit which animated Christianity, that everyone, irrespective of rank, even the lowest slave, was given the opportunity to win a halo for himself. This halo, a golden circle around the head, formed the insignia of the saints in the kingdom of God. It is true, among the old heathen,

too, a mortal could attain the rank of a demigod, but this honor was bestowed only on the most wonderful heroes, such as, for example, Hercules. In later years, the Roman emperors, too, were classed among the Gods. But it had been something unheard of among the barbarous "heathen," to bestow upon a common slave this great honor. It remained for the noble spirit of Christianity to make this high dignity accessible to all persons, rich or poor, high or low. All that was necessary to enter the ranks of the saints, was patient endurance and suffering in this world, and a horrible death in honor of the Lord Jesus Christ. Eventually it was sufficient to allow one's self to be thrown into a vat of boiling oil, or to let one's eyes be bored out by red-hot irons, to make one's self eligible for the position of saint.

Another custom of the people, inherited from away back, was the widespread use of relics. All sorts of rare stones, shells, corals, little pieces of the wood of holy trees, small images of heroes, in short, everything that the imagination of a superstitious people could devise was worshipped as possessing power of healing or performing miracles. The custom of carrying these relics about with one, as safeguards against illness and evil spirits, was widespread. Many refused to begin any important enterprise without first consulting their relics. Many believed their relics able to cure all diseases. The small altars at the entrance of every house, on which there stood always the image of the household God, were usually decorated with a number of such relics, each one of which was supposed to perform special miracles.

Naturally Christianity, as the propounder of the "pure, divine truth," could not tolerate such a ridiculous superstition. Consequently laws were enacted by the Church which strictly forbade all Christians to indulge in such heresy. But Christianity was not yet the only religion; the old Gods had not entirely disappeared from the face of the earth. Care had to be exercised not to frighten the people away from the new religion. Soon the fatherly care of the good bishops found an excellent equivalent for the relics of the superstitious heathen. Of course, the earthly

remains of the many saints whose immortal souls with a golden halo around the head rested at the foot of the throne of Christ, must possess a divine power. To convince the people of the magic qualities of these "relics," a number of them were placed underneath the altars in churches. So general became this custom that a decree from Constantinople commanded that all altars which were not erected above relics, should be torn down. This wonderful custom has been retained up to the present day. At the consecration of a Catholic Church, even today, some relic—be it a tooth or a nail or the few hairs of a saint—is carried to the altar in a solemn procession of priests, and there deposited amidst great pomp and ceremony. The number of relics in course of time grew to immense dimensions; but the great demand for them justified their number. For every good Christian at all able to secure such a relic (they were naturally expensive) managed to possess a few. Instead of the heathen household Gods and the superstitious relics there now stood on the altar of a Christian house, the image of Mary, the Mother of our Savior; a crucifix of ebony or ivory; a rosary, and a number of relics consisting of molars, hairs, pieces of a coat, nails, and other such articles. So on the one hand the nonsensical "superstition" of the heathen had been done away with, and on the other the people had been given the equivalent in things pious in the eyes of the Lord of the blessed, truth-proclaiming Christianity.

Tartarus, grossly neglected by the heathens, was made again the recipient of new honors. Of course, from now on it was called hell, which materially altered the matter. Punishment was made much more severe. While the heathen had been foolish enough to punish only particularly evil criminals with the pains of Tartarus, henceforth everyone who in any way acted contrary to the doctrines and instruction of the good priests was sent to hell. This undoubtedly added greatly to the fame and honor of "our Lord, Jesus Christ." Besides, the old Tartarus, that is the present hell, had been given an entirely new staff. In the place of senile Pluto, we find the young and energetic

"Satan." He had no wife as Pluto had. But his kingdom was filled with a lot of subordinate devils, witches, and evil spirits of every sort, who all carried out the orders of their master most conscientiously.

The most popular holidays of the Romans were the Saturnalia. They were celebrated in honor of Saturn, in commemoration of the creation of light. The festivities lasted several days and filled the people with joy and merriment. Houses were decorated with green vines, persons gave one another presents, and everyone tried to give others pleasure. All public business was suspended on these days; children stayed at home from school, and the courts of justice were closed. All differences of rank were disregarded during these festivities; even slaves were granted on this occasion all the privileges and pleasures of the rich, inasmuch as they were released from all duties. This charming holiday, which was celebrated towards the end of December, could, naturally, not be taken from the people without arousing their antagonism. Therefore, it was allowed to take place as heretofore, only instead of the Saturnalia, the birth of "our Savior Jesus Christ," who had now become the "true light of the world," was celebrated. In a similar manner one acted in regard to the other holidays.

In this way, without great difficulty, Christianity was made the official religion of the state. Without the good Roman citizen having the slightest idea that anything of importance was going on, he was changed from a wild "heathen" into a "pious Christian." That he himself knew little or nothing of Christianity not only did not detract from his piety, but was altogether in accordance with the intentions of the priests. Ignorance on the part of the layman, in religious matters, was soon looked upon as a virtue. Those old communistic ideas of former Christianity were long ago forgotten and buried. Equality and fraternity now existed only after death, in the kingdom of heaven. "Christian love" was made the cloak for all the suppressions and burdens of the people. Whatever was done henceforth,



was done in "Christian love" and "in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ."

Implicit obedience to the orders of the priests was demanded of the pious Christian people. Obedience was proclaimed as the greatest Christian virtue. The more a poor man had to suffer in this world, the more patiently he endured the lot of a martyr, the greater were his prospects of eternal salvation in the other world. But alas for the wicked man who dared to act in disobedience to the orders of the priests; alas, for the accursed heretic who offended the holy laws of the Church! Eternal damnation in the fires of hell awaited him.

But the great ones of the state as well as of the Church vied with one another in the struggle for power and wealth. Where it seemed advisable, they combined and took advantage of their mutual support. At other times, they attacked and made war on one another in the most ferocious manner, each party endeavoring to hurt the other as much as possible in "Christian love," and to attain the highest power. But the poor people had to shed their blood in Christian obedience for those under whose power they pined, hoping that "our Savior Jesus Christ" would some day in the other world recompense them for all their pain and suffering.

This is the history of the famous "victory" of "Christianity" over the ancient "heathenism," of which the world is so proud and which historians can not praise too highly. This is the "victory," which they laud as the most important and the greatest achievement in the history of nations.

## X. THE "BLESSING" OF CHRISTIANITY.

### 1.—CHRISTIANITY AND THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

In the year 312, Constantine began to protect Christianity, trying to place himself at its head and to hold in his own hands its reins, as he did those of every other institution in the empire. For twelve years the two religions continued to exist, side by side, the emperor remaining the head of both. *Pro forma*, the old doctrine of the Gods remained the official religion of state during this period, and Christianity was only tolerated. But secretly everything was done even by the government itself to make Christianity the state religion, for the peculiar situation of the emperor, as head of both religions, Christianity and heathenism, at one and the same time, could, of course, not be maintained indefinitely. In the year 324, therefore, after the lapse of twelve years, the time was supposed to have arrived for proclaiming Christianity the religion of the state. The tables were now turned. Christianity, which until now had been only tolerated, became the legitimate religion, and the old, dethroned Gods now occupied the position of tolerance. Tolerated they had to be, for the emperor, as well as his successors up to Gratian, continued to fill the position of Pontifex Maximus. This situation continued for about seventy years longer, for it was only in the year 392 that Theodorus issued a proclamation which strictly forbade all sacrifices and the entire cult of the heathen. But just this proclamation, as well as other ordinances that soon followed, plainly show that the old divine service was not yet entirely extinct. Altogether, it took about five hundred years from the first appearance of Christianity until the old doctrine of the Gods was entirely eradicated from the Roman Empire.

The highly important question, What influence did Christianity have on the conditions of that time, that is, on the last century of the Roman Empire, can be answered from a purely objective viewpoint only as follows:

Concerning the head of the state, that is, the emperor, he certainly could be at heart nothing but inimical to Christianity. True religious faith was something utterly unknown to the Roman emperors of that time. Their attitude towards the doctrine of religion was determined almost entirely by utilitarian motives. After having combated in vain the danger which threatened them for centuries, with every means at their disposal, they were forced to recognize the clergy as one of the most important factors of the state. The emperor was compelled to share the power which hitherto had belonged to him alone; in fact, in many respects, to subordinate himself to this very power. Constantine, sly and keen, like his successors, made a virtue of necessity. Instead of succumbing in the struggle against an irresistible power, he made himself its ally, sharing the highest power with it, and thereby becoming celebrated as the hero of Christianity.

It required an unscrupulous nature like that of Constantine to play such a role. That a scientifically educated man of that time should have actually believed in the legends of Christianity is hardly possible. Therefore, the truly educated Romans did not adopt Christianity, the better class of the Christians either being not up to date in the sciences, or favoring Christianity, as Constantine did, for purely practical reasons. In accordance with this stands the fact that the noble and high-minded emperors of that period remained antagonistic to Christianity, while the unscrupulous and psychically degenerate emperors adopted it.

The character of Constantine, who hesitated at no crime, has been sketched in the foregoing chapter. His three miserable sons, who at his death shared the empire, received their education from the priests and flatterers, retained in the palace of their father. Their religion began with the murder of their two uncles, two cousins, five other relatives, and a number of distinguished men. They used

Christianity, as their father had done, to further their own personal interests. On the other hand, they were under the influence and pressure of the priests, who well knew how to guard their own position. Ambition and greed were the motives at the bottom of all their actions. Impelled by jealousy and envy, they quarrelled among themselves, and threw the country into the most devastating civil war.

As a striking contrast to these "Christian emperors," we have already mentioned that noble character, Marcus Aurelius. He was an unselfish monarch, who in every respect had the good of his country at heart. Kindness and clemency, courage and energy, were his most characteristic qualities. He persecuted the Christians with every available means, because in them he saw the greatest danger to the empire.

We now come to another emperor, unfriendly to Christianity, who enters on the scene of action only after "Christianity" had already accomplished its "victory" over the "heathen." This is Flavius Julianus, whom the historians call "the apostate."

Julian, a nephew of Constantine, the so-called "great," was also surrounded during his youth by priests, who did their utmost to make a "good Christian" of him. But, to their chagrin, a wide-awake spirit showed itself early in young Julian, who strove to act and judge independently. He delved into Greek literature with ardor, and was particularly keen in philosophy. In Athens, he sat at the feet of the great academicians, studying the doctrines of the various schools of philosophy at their source. This brought him, finally, into closer contact with the Neoplatonic school, which originated in the third century. This new philosophy had developed from the old Hellenic doctrine of the Gods, which in its original form, had long ago been recognized as the poetic embodiment of the different phenomena of Nature. Extracting from those mythological legends the truly theistic element, it tried to blend with it the scientific interpretations of the phenomena of the universe. From the Polytheism of ancient times developed a new Pantheism, which was free from every personification of the Deity, and

therefore was considered far superior to Monotheism by philosophers.

What a pitiful impression the twaddle of those miserable priests must have made on a youthful spirit, which had thrown itself with enthusiasm into the study of these philosophical doctrines! To Christianity, which at that time had not yet been made mystical by interpretations and symbolizations, there existed no problems. Everything was smooth and clear. The person of God, his Son, the latter's mother, as well as the whole heavenly court, all was as clear and well defined as the Byzantine court. To give this matter any thought was not only unnecessary but forbidden. The people were not even supposed to know anything about it. For the main thing, the quintessence of Christianity, was absolute obedience, subordination to the power and supremacy of the clergy.

Between these two, young Julian was to choose. On the one side, the height of science attained at that time, which after all was by no means inferior to the various philosophical systems which originated fifteen hundred years later; on the other, the superstition of a pack of uncouth fishermen, inherited from generation to generation. On the one side, the free and noble striving for truth and knowledge; on the other, the absolute renunciation of all independent thought, the slavish subordination to a well-organized and disciplined clergy that had only its own interests in mind. The choice could not be difficult for the highly gifted young Julian. With utter disgust he turned from a doctrine based on ancient superstitions, from a system whose hypocritical and egotistical nature had become quite apparent to him.

But the same contempt which he had for the Christian superstition he had for the cult of the old Gods. It was his aim to found a new divine service, based on free theosophical ideas.

Neither religious persecutions nor forcible conversions took place under the reign of this humane emperor. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate to express openly and freely his opinion about Christianity. The idea of worshiping the

son of a carpenter, born in Jerusalem, as God, must have seemed utterly ridiculous to this philosophical emperor, perpetually striving for truth and cognition, and he used every opportunity of word and pen to combat this superstition. Because of its purely Monotheistic doctrines, he considered the Jewish religion far more rational than the Christian, and therefore favored the Jews. He even wanted to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, but an earthquake frightened the laborers to such an extent that they ran away from their work.

Julian was gifted with the most brilliant mental qualities and his unfortunately short reign shows the noblest intentions and efforts. He hated all ostentation and superfluous luxury. Upon his accession to the throne he dismissed a large part of the idle servants from the palace. He had an enormous capacity for work. He was so indefatigable that his secretaries and counsellors had to be relieved while he continued to work without interruption.

With all these superior traits of character, he combined the genius of a great commander, so that he became the terror of the valiant Franks and Alemanni. The former he defeated in the bloody battle of Argentoratum, the Strassburg of today, where their king Churdomar was taken captive; the latter he compelled to make peace. He crossed the Rhine three times and forced his way far into Germany. Unfortunately, he met an untimely death in a battle of the Persian War. His valor led him personally to follow a fleeing troop of the enemy, though he was without his armor. Hit in the side by a missile, and wounded unto death, he dropped from his horse. He was only thirty-two years of age, and his reign had lasted only a year and eight months. The world has good reason, indeed, to mourn his death. Many things would, undoubtedly, have turned out differently if a longer life had been granted this extraordinary man. Perhaps the light of his superior mind would have saved the world from the frightful terrors of the Middle Ages, or, at least, have lessened them.

Is it not a shame that even today children are taught in school the lying twaddle about the "apostate Julian," the "Godless Emperor," who deserted the course of his uncle,

the "noble and God-fearing Emperor Constantine" and raised "heathenism" above Christianity again? All those historians who write in this spirit about one of the most distinguished and noble characters in history, show either their gross ignorance or their own hypocrisy.

Julian had all those virtues, like philanthropy, justice, honor, and truthfulness, of which Christianity has always boasted but has never practiced. If Christianity were what it has always pretended to be, there could be no better "Christian" than Julian, while Constantine, the real hero of Christianity, combined in himself all those traits of character which are unjustly attributed to the "heathen."

We may well compare Julian with a man in modern history, to whose great genius the world will be forever indebted, who inspired his contemporaries with new and liberal ideas, and raised them far above the superstition of their times—we mean no one less than Frederick the Great. Both loved simplicity and despised all useless luxury. Both had an immense capacity for work, which was turned to the most varying paths of human endeavor. Both were humane and just princes, the welfare of whose people was dear to their hearts. Both had an unusual talent for generalship, which made them the terror of their enemies and the idol of their armies. Both evinced a warm interest in art and science and understood how to surround themselves with the most prominent men in these spheres. Both harbored the greatest contempt for every religious dogma. Through their philosophical views and the liberality of their ideas both raised themselves far above the level of their contemporaries.

Christianity was bound to have the same influence on all the rest of the educated people at that time as it had on the emperors. Those who, according to the pædagogical system of that period, were educated in the Greek and Roman philosophy, could see in the Christian doctrine only a vain superstition which differed from the old doctrine of the Gods only in its form. The latter was interpreted by the educated world only as symbolical poetry; no scientifically educated men believed for an instant in the actual exist-

ence of the old Gods. How, then, could one expect them to make a Jewish carpenter their God?

As to the great mass of the uneducated rabble, it remained immaterial whether they were given this or that superstition. As was stated before, they were allowed to retain their festivals and holidays, as well as the inherited ceremonials. Everything else was a matter of absolute indifference. The crowd went to church obediently and was easier to control by the Christian system than had been the case before.

To the priesthood, it goes without saying, Christianity was most welcome. The augurs who in the performance of their duties, laughed at one another in their sleeves, made excellent priests. They realized that here they had the prospect of a far better and above all more profitable career, than there. Without great difficulty they made themselves familiar with their new duties. Instead of sacrificing at the altar of this or that God, a mass was now read. Instead of stirring about the entrails of a sacrificial animal, they gave the people bread and wine and persuaded them that it was the actual flesh and blood of their "Savior," who had died for them five hundred years before. Later on, when they had to attend to the drinking of wine all alone, they were even more zealous in the performance of this function.

This is the influence which Christianity exerted on the Roman citizens, when the Empire was approaching its fall. Between the raising of Christianity to the plane of the Roman state-religion, and the definite fall of the Western empire, lies a span of a hundred and fifty years. Naturally the question arises: What relationship had Christianity to this fall? Why could Christianity not prevent the fall of the Empire?

The decline and fall of the Roman Empire was caused, as stated before, by internal processes of disintegration. It was said that the wild hordes flocking into the Empire were only the exciting cause; that the real cause had long before been at work in the social decadence of the state. It would therefore be unjust to reproach Christianity for not having prevented this fall. Nevertheless, you might expect to see



the fruits of Christianity, which then had reigned a century and a half. If it were really true that Christianity has so ennobling an effect on mankind, as is stubbornly maintained to the present day, this should have manifested itself just at the time of such a tragic and world-revolutionizing event as the fall of the mighty Roman Empire.

It is by no means only the victor who is apt to win our admiration. We frequently behold an honorable heroic defeat more worthy of laurels than many well-deserved victories. Who can think of Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans without the greatest admiration for their heroism? Who has forgotten the grief with which he bemoaned the fate of Troy? Who is not filled with respect and admiration for those brave Goths who set sail with wife and child to seek a new home after having fought heroically for every inch of ground, only to be finally defeated by the superior numbers of the enemy? Is the fall of the Roman Empire graced by such acts of valor? Did Christianity succeed in a hundred and fifty years in producing such Romans as heathenism gave birth to during the prime of the republic? No, alas, it did not! Internal dissensions, envy, jealousy, and greed on the part of the Christian statesmen hastened the fall of the Empire. Base treachery gave it its death-thrust.

When in the year 375, the Huns fell upon the nations of Europe, they also threatened the Western Goths. This bold people was divided into two parts, one Christian, the other heathen. The Christians, desiring to cross the Danube, asked the Emperor Valens to give them peaceful domicile in the Empire, in return for which they promised their services in time of war. Valens accepted their offer and allowed them to locate in Thrace. This immense body of fighting men, who are said to have numbered two hundred thousand, could have given the Roman Empire tremendous assistance had they been received in a spirit of Christian love and treated humanely and justly. But what did the "Christian" Romans do? How did they receive their "Christian brethren"? By treating them most cruelly and by selling them the worst possible provisions at the highest

prices, they tried to drive them to such despair that they would feel themselves compelled to give up all their goods and chattels and finally their personal liberty as well. After these poor people, in dire need, had sacrificed all their property, as well as their slaves, they finally had to part even from their wives and children, whom they preferred to sell into slavery to seeing them starve to death. In the utmost despair, they took to arms and destroyed a number of Roman armies in battles than which there are none more terrible in Roman history. They joined a tribe of the Ostrogoths and conquered the entire open country from Thrace and Macedonia to the Adriatic and Ægean Seas.

After Theodosius, in the year 395, had divided the Empire between his two sons, Rufinus, the jealous and envious administrator of the Eastern Empire, persuaded Alaric to make an attack on Italy with the Visigoths. When the valiant Stilicho wanted to march against them, he was prevented from doing so by every intrigue possible to envy and jealousy, and was finally accused of treason and sentenced to death. Thus, prompted by mutual hatred and envy, the enemy was brought into the country by themselves and the only man who could have saved it was put out of the way. The result of this "Christian Love" was the invasion of a mighty army of "Pagan" Germans, Vandals, Suevi, and Alani, into the northern and western provinces, as well as the conquest of Rome by Alaric, which was now compelled to purchase its liberty as an enormous price.

In the same way, through internal discord and intrigues, the last province that was of importance to Rome, that is, Africa, at that time called the "corn-chamber of Rome," was lost. The governor of the province, Boniface, infuriated by the treachery and intrigues of his rival Ætius, called on the Vandals from Spain for assistance. Led by their king, Giseric, they responded to the call, conquered and devastated the country, and took it away forever from Roman government. Giseric thereupon skilled his Vandals in the arts of navigation and shipbuilding. He built a powerful fleet and thus renewed Carthage's old sovereignty of the sea. He conquered a part of Sicily and most brutally devastated the

coast of Italy. As Boniface had called the Vandals into the country, so the "Christian" Ætius now joined the wild Huns, and at their head usurped the supreme command over the entire Roman army. He is the same Ætius who defended Europe against the Huns under Attila and came off victorious from the great battle with the Huns. In gratitude for this, he and all his friends, after the death of Attila, were atrociously murdered by the "Christian" Emperor Valentinian III. The latter, who was generally hated because of his cowardice and debauchery, was taken by vengeance, inasmuch as Senator Petronius Maximus had him assassinated for having dishonored his wife "with the help of the most infamous intrigue."

When in the year 468, Basiliscus, the brother-in-law of Emperor Anthemius, with a large fleet, approached Carthage, and after several victories, found himself in a position to conquer this important city, this miserable traitor allowed himself to be bribed with money by Giseric to basely betray his country and his emperor.

Three years later, guided solely by ambition and vanity, General Ricimer mutinied, in spite of the fact that he was the son-in-law of the emperor. He led his army against Rome, sacked and plundered the city, and had Emperor Anthemius, his wife's father, put to death. In the delight they took in ruin and destruction, the troops of this "Christian" general were a close second to the brutal Vandals.

Of course, it is not possible here to give a comprehensive idea of the spirit that prevailed at that time. These few sketches, however, represent the morals, or rather the immorals, of this period of history. "Christian love" sounds like irony issuing from the lips of historians, in view of the atrocities and indecencies that characterized those days.

How could any religion, whether it is called "Christianity" or "Paganism," exert an ennobling influence on mankind, if the propounders of its doctrines mutually defamed and persecuted each other? Christianity distinguished itself from all other religions in that from its first appearance until the present day it not only separated into a vast number of different sects, but that these sects per-

secuted and cursed one another in a manner in which decent people would not treat their bitterest enemies. And this is the much-vaunted "Christian love."

The Arian controversy has already been mentioned in the foregoing chapter. As was absolutely inevitable, those paranoical delusions which gave rise to the conception of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, if taken at their true value, had to lead to the most diverse opinions. Altogether logically, many thought, that if there be a Father and a Son, they had to deal with two Gods, for these honest people had learned at school that  $1 + 1 = 2$ . Of course, nobody dared to give utterance to such an outrageous discovery. Even today the learned Christian theologians look down pityingly on the stupid and ignorant churls who, like those people, believe that  $1 + 1 = 2$ .

The "true" Christian doctrine, as it was promulgated at that time, particularly by Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, was "that Christ, the Son of God, was of the same substance as the Father, and that he was generated from this substance from eternity. Anyone stupid enough not to understand this wisdom was to keep quiet and have—faith. In opposition to this doctrine Arius, a Presbyter, claimed this: "Christ, though superior to all other men, was created out of nothing, by the will of God."

This controversy, which originated at the beginning of the fourth century, was to have the most disastrous consequences. All of Christendom split into two parties, which, for centuries, bitterly fought and cursed each other. From time to time, one or the other party modified its doctrine, but in spite of many endeavors to reconcile them, these parties remained hostile and implacable toward each other.

After councils and negotiations had brought matters so far that the divinity of Christ was generally admitted, the Alexandrian school wanted to make the old lady, Mother Mary, also a Deity. Mother and son can not be different beings, this school taught quite logically, and then illogically continued that since the son is a Deity, the mother must be one too. She was, therefore, given the title "Theotokos," the God mother.

In vain did Constantine try to put an end to the controversy at the Council at Nicaea. In view of the fact that each party, by excommunicating the other, hoped to gain possession of its property, the heart of the pious priests could not possibly be softened. An emperor like Constantine was inconvenient to them, for this purpose. He was much too clever to attach any importance to the matter. He who simultaneously stood at the head of the pagan cult and of Christianity laughed to himself at these ridiculous quarrels. What he wanted for the welfare of the state, and above all for the preservation of the throne, was peace and harmony. He had trouble enough to force the pagan cult out of existence, after having, of necessity, joined the Christian Church. Of what use were such controversies to him?

Emperor Julian's religious views were very much like those of Constantine, but he was honest and straight enough to express his real views on the subject, and to act accordingly. Instead of acting as intermediary between the two parties, as his predecessor had done, he dismissed them both. Against Julian's strength of character and greatness of mind the arts of the priesthood were utterly futile. Like a rock in the ocean his heroic figure rises, he whom the priests called the "apostate" and towards whom they showed a deadly hatred because of his justness.

They met with better results when dealing with emperors less highly gifted, who lent their flatteries and intrigues a willing ear. There was, for instance, young Gratian, who, at the time he ascended the throne, was generally beloved. His father Valentinian had given him the best education he could obtain at that time. The best masters in the various branches of art and science were engaged to instruct him. His weak and suggestible nature made him doubly susceptible to the impressions of his environment. But these remained on the surface, not penetrating into the depth of his mind, as is often the case with such characters. The doctrines of the greatest masters of his time were reflected in him when he ascended the throne, so that all eyes were turned on him with hope and

expectation. His father had obviously not laid much stress on religious training, Ausorius, an opponent of Christianity, being the head-master engaged to teach him.

But now the priests began to make their influence felt. They knew how to entangle the weak-minded prince in their nets by flatteries and intrigues. While he more and more neglected his duties as ruler, they flattered his vanity and wrested from him one concession after another. He spent most of his time hunting, leaving the affairs of the state to others. In childish pride and ambition to excel in exhibitions of physical strength, he surrounded himself with individuals from the lowest, most vulgar, class, so that he was compared to Nero and Commodus, losing all the respect of his subjects. He was so despised by the army that the soldiers openly mutinied.

The priests used all this to further their own ends. While the affairs of state continued to sink lower and lower, and a system of miserable corruption arose, the bishops held him securely in their clutches, and well knew how to form the conscience of the easily-led prince in their own interests. Ambrosius, for his especial instruction, wrote a treatise on the Trinity. Finally they induced him to issue an edict according to which every violation or neglect, nay, even every ignorance of the divine doctrines, was punished as a "capital-crime."

(*Qui divinæ legis sanctitatem nesciendo omittunt, aut negligendo violant, et offendunt, sacrilegium committunt. Codex Justinian 6, ix. Tit. xxix. leg. i.*)

This emperor, who by his weakness and lack of character, had brought matters so far that he was despised and hated by his whole people as well as by his army, so that he was finally put out of the way by force, this same emperor was worshiped almost as a saint by the clergy, merely because he became the willing tool of the sly and tricky priesthood. His celebrated teacher, the great archbishop of Milan, Ambrosius, rewarded him for his "Christian deeds" by a particular seat of honor in Heaven.<sup>175</sup>

Of particular interest to our purpose is the attitude of

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<sup>175</sup>Tom. II. de Obit. Val. Consol, p.1193.

an emperor towards the Christian controversies, who also acted from religious conviction, but who, at the same time, possessed great energy and strength of character, so that history conferred upon him the title "the great." We mean "Theodosius the Great."

This emperor had certainly enjoyed no scientific education. His father served the empire as commander in Britannia and Africa, where opportunities for scientific study could hardly be expected. He was of a more practical disposition, as his interest in agriculture shows, to the pursuit of which he devoted himself entirely, after his father had fallen into disfavor and had been executed. Philosophical and religious meditations were unknown to him. Accepting the Christian faith as a heritage, of the truth of which there could be no question, the mere thought that the holy precepts as taught him by the priests could be false, seemed a crime to him. Therefore, from his innermost conviction, he was quite ready to subordinate himself in religious matters to the priestly authority. Just as he demanded absolute obedience from his soldiers, who idolized him, just as he held the reins of the government with a rigid hand, tolerating no opposition, so he himself was ready to receive and conscientiously carry out orders when religious matters were in question. How genuine and upright were his submission and loyalty to the priesthood is shown by the humiliation to which he allowed them to subject him, when Archbishop Ambrosius forbade him entrance into the church and made him do penance for the massacre committed by him in Thessalonica.

His actions, so far as religious matters are concerned, therefore represent submission to the will of Christian authority of those times. Christianity, therefore, not he, is responsible for the issuance of religious edicts, as well as for the way in which they were carried out. Here, for instance, is one of the most important edicts: "It is our pleasure that all the nations which are governed by our clemency and moderation, should steadfastly adhere to the religion which was taught by St. Peter to the Romans; which faithful tradition has preserved; and which is now professed by the

Pontiff Damascus, and by Peter, bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the discipline of the apostles and the doctrine of the gospel, let us believe the sole Deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, under an equal majesty and a pious Trinity. We authorize the followers of this doctrine to assume the title of Catholic Christians, and as we judge that all others are extravagant madmen, we brand them with the infamous name of Heretics, and declare that their conventicles shall no longer usurp the respectable appellation of churches. Besides the condemnation of divine justice they must expect to suffer the severe penalties which our authority, guided by heavenly wisdom, shall think proper to inflict upon them."<sup>176</sup>

This edict, which, according to our present views, must appear incredible, did not remain an empty threat, but was carried out rigidly. The most frightful atrocities were committed, not only against people who doubted the Christian doctrine, for they, few in number, did not venture to express their opinions, but against a sect of Christians no less orthodox and fanatical, but who dared to differ in one or more points from the authorized dogma.

Just how far Theodosius was under the influence of the priests, and, indeed, allowed himself to become a mere tool in their hands, and with what ridiculous farces they managed to win the emperor for their purpose, is shown by the following occurrence:

Shortly after Theodosius had given his eldest son, Arcadius, the title and the dignity of an Augustus, both monarchs were sitting on a throne to receive the homage of their subjects. Among those present was the Bishop of Iconium, Amphilochius. After having shown the Emperor all the customary honor, he addressed the son, the newly-made Augustus, in the same way that he would speak to a youth from the midst of the people. Hereupon, Theodosius grew so angry that he ordered this churlish bishop thrown out of the door. But before the guards could lay hands on him, the bishop cried, "So, O Emperor, the King of Heaven will

<sup>176</sup>Codex Theodos. 1, xvi. Tit. 1, leg. 2.



some day treat all those who profess to honor the father but deny his divine Son the same majesty." The Emperor embraced the Bishop of Iconium and henceforth bore the lesson which this parable taught, in mind."<sup>177</sup>

Constantinople was the chief center of Arianism. Here the various views and theories concerning the divinity of Christ were exhaustively discussed. The enthusiasm on this subject did not confine itself to the clergy, but took hold of the people as well. The entire population seemed to think of nothing but these important controversies. All interest in other matters, in art and science, seemed quenched, and Christ was the central point of all spiritual activity. The following description may give a fairly good idea of the spirit that ruled at that time:

"This city," says an outside observer, "is full of mechanics and slaves, who are all of them profound theologians and preach in the shops and in the streets. If you desire a man to change a piece of silver, he informs you wherein the son differs from the father; if you ask the price of a loaf, you are told by way of reply that the son is inferior to the father; and if you inquire whether the bath is nearby, the answer is that the son was made out of nothing."<sup>178</sup>

The orthodox Catholic party was far from strong and consequently all the churches belonged to the Arians. To have a bishop of their own, this party sent an invitation to Gregory Nazianzen, which he gladly accepted. A private house was the meeting-place of this small congregation, and it received as the expression of the new faith of Nicene the name of "Anastasia."

Gregory, whom the Catholic Church later made a saint, was one of those exalted devotees who spent their lives in fasting, prayers, and castigations, and who looked upon the most innocent pleasure as a serious crime. He had spent a part of his life in the desert so as to escape from all earthly impressions and to associate only with God. Every joy, every earthly indulgence, seemed accursed to him. "His diet was coarse bread, with salt and water. He

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<sup>177</sup>Sozomen 1, vii c 6; Theodoret 1, v c 16.

<sup>178</sup>Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. IV, p. 71.

lay upon the ground, wore nothing but what was coarse and vile. He worked hard all day, and spent a considerable part of the night in singing the praises of God or in contemplation. His classics and books of profane oratory he abandoned to the worms and moths."

The Arians, who on their side were no less fanatical in the pursuit of their own religious doctrine, were consumed with hatred towards the new congregation Anastasia. From the pulpit of the mightiest church, St. Sophia, admonitions were preached to the people, to destroy by force every member of the other church. The doors of Anastasia were forcibly opened, and the members of the two Christian sects fell upon each other with violence. They fought with sticks, stones, and firebrands, until the whole city seemed in a tumult.

At this moment Emperor Theodosius approached at the head of his victorious army, by order of his Catholic priests. On the very day after his arrival, he had Damophilus, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, brought before him and gave him the alternative: Either to adopt and proclaim orthodox Catholicism and to sign the decree of Nicene, or to give up immediately the episcopal palace, the cathedral of St. Sophia, and all other churches to the orthodox Catholics. Damophilus preferred poverty, exile, and death, to becoming a traitor to his faith.

The Arian priests had to leave Constantinople and the troops of the emperor occupied the churches of the city. Gregory was led in triumph through the streets by the emperor, and received directly from his hands the insignia of the Episcopalian throne of Constantinople.

Six weeks later, Theodosius issued the order to drive all bishops who refused to proclaim the orthodox Catholic doctrine, with all their subordinates, out of the churches of his Empire. By force of arms this command was promptly executed, in the name of the emperor and "in honor of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

There is no end to the lamentations of historians about the gruesome persecutions of the Christians under the heathen Roman emperors. Though it would occur to no

one to defend the brutality of those acts of violence, still they must be judged as a measure to which emperors like Marcus Aurelius were forced by political conditions. But what can be said of the fact that Christian emperors persecuted their Christian subjects with the same cruelty merely because of a dogmatic difference? And the worst of all this is that Theodosius was by no means a wicked man, who, like the degenerate Nero, enjoyed the agonies of his fellowmen. No, on the contrary! Theodosius the Great was an excellent emperor, a conscientious man, who acted according to the best dictates of his conscience and knowledge. He acted under direct orders from the heads of the church, whom he looked up to with the greatest respect. Therefore, it is not Theodosius himself who is responsible for those persecutions, but the Church. It was not the brutality of the emperor that manifested itself in these atrocities, but the brutality of that institution which calls itself "Christianity."

From that time forth occurred those frightful persecutions of every person who dared to express an independent opinion on religious matters. Up to then, the fathers of the church had freely interchanged opinions on the obscure and incomprehensible doctrines of Christianity. Those who were willing to believe had attempted to gain knowledge and understanding. It is quite natural that the most diverse views should arise concerning those incomprehensible conceptions which were based on delusions and hallucinations, such as, particularly, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. What could a thinking person make of this? How could a sane person reconcile himself to the doctrine that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost together were only one God? At the very least, they would have to express their doubt and seek an explanation.

But henceforth all discussion of these things was forbidden. Anyone who dared to touch the confession of faith as laid down by the united bishopric at Constantinople, or even to express the slightest doubt, was condemned as a miserable heretic. And the orthodox emperor considered every heretic "a rebel against the highest powers of heaven

and earth." The Holy Fathers, who directed the conscience of the emperor, saw to it that the most energetic measures were taken for the persecution of heretics. Inside of fifteen years he issued at least fifteen edicts against them. To rob those accused of heresy of every hope of acquittal, the emperor expressly ordered that in case any proofs or persuasions be advanced in their favor, the judges should declare the same frauds and forgeries.

The most dreadful punishments were inflicted on those pronounced guilty of heresy. Priests who ventured in their teachings to differ ever so little from the prescribed dogma were not only deposed from their offices, but, according to the enormity of their offense, were fined large sums of money, banished from the country, stripped of their possessions, and even sentenced to death. The churches belonging to congregations convicted of heresy, were confiscated and added to the domain of the emperor.

Every priest had to watch carefully that all these instructions were rigidly observed by the members of his congregation. He could inflict the severest punishments for heretical actions of any sort. One of the most general punishments was excommunication. The person concerned was not only excluded from the church membership—that a good many would probably have borne with patience—but every good Christian was strictly forbidden to have intercourse of any kind with one who was excommunicated. Naturally, this made it well-nigh impossible for such a person to earn his living, and direst need and misery were the result. Not seldom the fanatical rabble used such an opportunity to heap the most brutal insults on such an unfortunate person. The punishments for heresy were such that the death penalty was often looked upon as a mild form.

Every Roman citizen had not only the right, but it was his duty, to accuse any fellow-citizen, be it his own father or son, of heresy, as soon as he got the faintest suspicion of its existence. Theodosius created the office of "Faith-inquisitor," the germ of an institution which, as we will see later on, became the greatest curse to mankind.

Such was the celebrated "Christian Love." This was what remained of the brotherhood, who gathered together for the purpose of mutual and general edification, in whose eyes all men were equals and whose uppermost purpose it was to help and benefit their fellowmen.

If they acted thus brutally towards their own Christian brethren, how must the Christians, having now arrived at power, have treated those unfortunates who had remained loyal to their old religion, the Jews and "Pagans"! Special edicts were issued against every mode of heathen worship. The old temples of the Gods were everywhere either turned into Christian churches or totally destroyed. The people executed this work of destruction with a zeal and enthusiasm which was by no means inferior to the delight which the Vandals found in ravage and devastation. Many a noble work of art, the remains of which have in recent years been dug up and put on exhibition in museums, owes its demolition to Christian love. Neither the brutality of wild barbarians nor the phenomena of Nature, such as earthquakes and the like, have carried such destruction among the art treasures of antiquity in the southern parts of Greece and Asia Minor, as did the fanaticism and superstition of Christianity.

We have now observed four emperors one after the other, each one of whom, in his relationship to Christianity, represents a whole class of men.

First of all, there is Constantine, a man of great ability, but utterly unscrupulous. He used Christianity as a means for the furtherance of personal interests. It mattered little to him what this one or that one believed, as long as he attained his object. The purely religious side had no interest for him. Many people act and think as he did. The great mass of the clergy who follow this career because of ambition and personal interest without really believing in these things, belong in this category. The many great-augurs who have gone over to the prelate business, belong in this class. The great number of scientifically educated "Heathens" and Jews, who prefer to submit to the external rites and usages of Christianity rather than to play the

martyr for ideas in which they do not believe, are representatives of this category.

The second of these emperors is Julian, the "Apostate." A superior, noble nature, who has a horror of all falsehood and hypocrisy. He frankly admits that he does not believe in any of these things. He wants to have nothing to do with the church and the priests. Today there are a great many who belong in the same class with Julian. Every scientifically educated person whom personal considerations do not prevent from admitting the truth, belongs there. But at that time, when such an admission was made at the cost of one's life, most of the people preferred to be silent. The various schools of philosophy henceforth became silent. The school at Athens, once the main seat of spiritual greatness and florescence, degenerated more and more, until Justinian finally closed it.

The next is Gratian. A frivolous youth without great mental equipment and lacking in strength of character. One of the many natures who become the plaything of the environment in which fate has placed them. If they are lucky, their private lives may be successful. As rulers they are useless. After having started his career as a promising prince, Gratian became an emperor who was hated and despised by his people and his soldiers. But he was easily led and consequently a willing tool in the hands of the priests. Ambrosius "conferred" upon him a place of honor in heaven. People of this sort make up the great flock of sheep in which every sheep follows its leader without making even an attempt at independent thought. Their teachers are their prophets. Every printed word is gospel to them. They are carved out of the wood exactly as the Christian church wants them to be. If the priests succeed in overpowering them in time, they confer upon them a place of honor in the eternal kingdom of God.

And now Theodosius appears on the scene. A hero through and through, the son of a soldier, raised in the field, accustomed from his youth to the clang of arms. A thoroughly honest nature, without a scientific education, without a sense for art and science. Energetic and capable

in everything he undertook. He is as though born to lead his people in the struggles of this world. He receives the Christian doctrine from the mouths of the holy priests as a revelation from God. He would as little doubt its truth as the light of the sun. The command of the priest is the command of God. Anyone who opposes these instructions also opposes divine power and it is necessary to torture and martyrize such a person in this world to save him from eternal damnation in the next. To punish a heretic is the highest duty of a prince. We meet such characters frequently in the history of Christianity. They are the ones who make our blood freeze in our veins. Philip II. of Spain was a man of this type. The immense number of inquisitors of the Middle Ages, who condemned their fellowmen to the most inhuman, most barbarous tortures; who could quietly look on when men, women and children were tortured to death without evincing the slightest trace of human pity, were made of this stuff. They belonged in the same class with Theodosius the Great. They might have become excellent men, had a nobler motive than Christianity prompted their actions.

In spite of the most stringent measures taken by Theodosius against the heretics, in spite of the unlimited means which he gave to the Catholic party wherewith to destroy its opponents, the controversies and quarrels in the Christian Church not only continued but gradually assumed far greater dimensions. The cause lay in the nature and character of Christianity.

The complicated organization of the clergy, the iron discipline of this tremendous body, all the threads of which led to one point, the apostolic see in Rome, inspired every member of this huge corporation with the same ambition, the desire and struggle for power and supremacy. But while, on the one hand, this struggle for power was limited by the well-organized discipline, on the other was the temptation to become independently powerful through the setting up of a new dogma of faith and the necessarily resultant separation from the church. The religious confession of faith

was therefore only a means to an end, a means for achieving independent power and authority.

The easiest way to understand those religious disputes is to compare them with the political parties in the United States. Here, side by side, there are two great parties, the Republicans and the Democrats. Both are well-organized and well-disciplined corporations, who strive for power and supremacy. For this purpose, each of the parties issues its programme. The parties do not exist because each one represents a well-defined principle, but they issue their political ideas, their platform, before every election, in order to obtain the victory thereby. The party as such is the primary factor, and its programme serves only as a means to an end.

Thus it was with the manifest controversies in the Christian Church, and this is the reason that no mediator succeeded—and many emperors have tried this—in bringing about an agreement between the opposing parties. Neither party wished for a settlement of the religious controversies, for, on the whole, this was a matter of indifference to them. What they wanted was the destruction of the inimical party, and its subjugation under their own power. Constantinople was and remained the scene of these religious differences.

In spite of the fact that the synod at Chalcedon seemed to have put an end to the controversy as to the union between God and man through the embodiment of God, the party of "Monophysicists" continued to exist, grasping at every possible question for dispute merely to be able to continue the struggle against Rome. The Monophysicists denied the existence of two different natures in Christ, claiming that the mortal was entirely absorbed by the divine. They said that in Christ the divine nature was the product of two different natures, while the canonical dogma taught that two different natures coexisted in Christ. The most desperate battles were fought on account of this nonsense and the "Christian brothers" butchered one another like wild beasts.

The emperors, who stood helpless between these two parties, tried repeatedly to act as peacemakers, but the Monophysicists insisted on their "heretical" view of the unity of



both natures. To publicly emphasize this view, the Patriarch of Antioch added to a hymn then popular, "Holy God, Holy Strength, Holy Immortal, have pity on us," the words, "Who hast been crucified for us." When Emperor Anastasius I. declared himself ready to allow this addition to stand, he was accused of secretly favoring the Monophysists. The result was a desperate rebellion which very nearly cost the emperor his throne.

If today you glance through the accounts of all the battles which the "Christian brethren" fought among themselves "in honor of our Lord, Jesus Christ," it seems as though you were reading the text of an operetta instead of the history of that Christianity to which the world is supposed to owe its civilization.

The most erratic events occurred under the reign of the Emperor Justinian I. The same fury and passion with which the Christian dogmas of faith were fought for in Constantinople were bestowed upon the circensian games by the people and the court. On the days when the races took place in the circus, almost the whole city crowded to see them. Not alone the charioteers and the owners of horses and chariots were filled with lust for fight and hope of victory, but the entire populace took a fanatical interest in the result of the contest. A number of cliques which gave their favor to one or the other party were formed. Constantine had even separate seats erected in his new hippodrome for the different factions. This example was followed by the other cities of the Eastern empire.

The parties, in course of time, became great organized corporations with many officers, representing a genuine power. There were four such organizations, which were distinguished from one another by the color of their badges and clothing. These were the "blues," to whom the "whites" attached themselves, and the "green," of whom the "red" made friends. The colors were worn even on other occasions besides those of the games, and the mutually antagonistic "blues" and "greens" soon attained considerable political influence.

The wife of Justinian, the famous Theodora, was an

actress, who had raised herself from the dregs of the people to the position of empress. Without the slightest moral scruple, still she was a person of keen intelligence, great cleverness, and firm character. Justinian, though endowed with excellent qualities, which greatly benefited his contemporaries as well as posterity, was completely under the influence of this headstrong woman. She represented the real power at Court, and any one who wanted to obtain recognition and honor had to gain the favor and protection of this woman. Justinian might be compared with Louis XIV., and Theodora with his influential mistress, Madame de Maintenon.

The two religious parties, the orthodox who called themselves the "Catholic Church," and the "Heterodox," to whom the Monophysicists belonged, were still deadly enemies, each party striving to destroy the other. When Theodora had reached the height of her power, the two religious parties began a rivalry for her favor, and—what irony!—Theodora, indecency personified, became the protectress and lady of the orthodox Catholic party.

When Theodora, the daughter of a certain Akacius, who was the keeper of the bears for the animal fights, on the death of her father, when she was still a child, went to the "green" at the hippodrome and begged for help for her mother, she was turned away with scorn, while the "blue" took pity on her. A nature like Theodora's was not apt ever to forget such an insult and, therefore, henceforth remained unfriendly to the "green." Now, having arrived at a position of power, she let her enemies feel her revenge by showing preference everywhere for the "blue." Besides, she made this powerful organization the strongest support of the orthodox church party which she had made her protégé. Thus it happened that the two Christian religious parties were identified with the "blue" and the "green," the blue representing the Catholic doctrines and the green the Monophysical opposition. Everywhere the blue orthodox party obtained the preference. In the hippodrome they sat at the right of the emperor and had precedence at all festivities. Depending on the favor of the court, the blue

perpetrated all possible acts of violence against their opponents, so that there was no end of bloodshed and atrocities. Into all branches of society, even into the circle of the officers of law and the army, the intrigues of the "blue orthodox party" and the "green Monophysicists" found their way. Finally it came to an uprising of the "green," in consequence of which the emperor had thirty thousand "green" Monophysicists, when crowded together in the hippodrome, a defenseless mass, hewn down by his general, Belisarius. Oh! what a blessing Christianity has been to mankind!

The history of the last "Christian" emperors of the Eastern Empire is one long chain of cruelties and brutalities, which put the atrocities of the Roman emperors, like Nero, Caligula and Commodus far in the shade. Extirpation of the eyes, mutilation of the body, agonizing tortures of the most brutal kind, were every day occurrences. Quite an ordinary punishment for various offenses was cutting off the ears, the nose, and the tongue. The main object of all the quarrels and disputes was still furnished by the religious parties, who continued to defame and abuse each other in a way that was a disgrace to humanity. It was always the leaders of the church parties, the high ecclesiastics, who were the instigators of all those abominations and brutalities, perpetrated "in honor of our Lord Jesus Christ."

An ecclesiastical dissension which also cost thousands of human beings their lives was caused by the pictures and images in the churches. On the one hand, the worship of images had gone so far that there was actually no difference between the "pagan idolatry" and the Christian divine service. On the other hand, one insisted upon forcibly ejecting from the churches and destroying all images and other works of art. On this pretense, Constans II., who had marched with his troops into Italy to wrest it from the Longobards, plundered all the churches in Rome as well as in the other cities, thereby causing the world an irreparable loss. The greatest works of art of ancient times were ruthlessly destroyed. This Christian emperor, in the name of Christianity, rioted more fiercely than the vandals among

the noblest works of art of that time. What he did not have destroyed he had brought to the ships to take with him to Constantinople. They were, however, overtaken by the Arabs, and that most precious collection of art treasures was lost for all time.

The fiercest quarrel about the images arose between Emperor Leo III. and Pope Gregory II. All images of Christ, the Virgin, angels, martyrs, and saints were strictly forbidden by the emperor in all the eastern and Italian churches, while the Pope energetically opposed this order. The most fanatical struggles took place because of these things throughout the country, with secret and open weapons, with treachery and violence. These quarrels continued even during the reign of Leo's successors, until finally Emperor Constantinus Kopronymus, at a council in Constantinople, solemnly forbade the worship of images and had all images and relics thrown into the sea.

It was only when on the death of Leo IV., his wife, Irene, came to the throne, that this order was rescinded. Irene favored the party who worshiped images and through the synod of Nicaea had the worship of images reinstated. Because of this noble act she received the title of "pious and saintly empress." Nevertheless, this "saint" had the five sons of the last emperor, Constantine, deprived of their eyes and tongues because she deemed them dangerous to her. This "pious" and "saintly empress" also had a dagger thrust into the eyes of her own son, Constantine VI., for the purpose of making him unfit to occupy the throne.

Who would shed a tear for the vanished Roman Empire? Who would mourn for the destruction of that people? Oh, yes! There was a Roman race which we marvel at even today, a race that mankind will admire so long as it has a love for manliness, honorableness and energy. But that Roman race had vanished long before Christ and Christianity blessed the world. The most beautiful, noble, epoch in history is the time of Greece at its height; that heroic period which preceded Christianity for centuries. But that time of terror, the first centuries after Christianity had

arrived at power and strength, today yet fills us with horror, and will continue to do so so long as there are people of feeling left in the world.

The question, Why could not Christianity save the Roman Empire from its fall? must appear to him who is acquainted with history as idle irony. It is true nothing could have saved the empire. It was doomed to destruction, and no power in the world could have warded it off. But, if Christianity had possessed only one single atom of all that of which it constantly boasts; if it had had the slightest ennobling influence on mankind; if there had been a trace of that "Christian love" of which so much has been "written," that fall might at least have been a noble one. We would then have looked with respect and admiration upon the time when the old culture collapsed to make room for a new life. We would mourn over this, as we do over the downfall of Greece, as for a dearly-beloved departed one. Its memory would have been dear and sacred to us for all time to come.

Instead of this, we are grateful that times like those exist no more. As a patient, suffering tortures from an incurable disease, finds relief in death alone, so that downfall, which freed the world from unspeakable terrors, was heartily welcomed. The cancerous affection of this decadence lay in the endless struggles in which the various sects of Christianity butchered one another. Art and science were enveloped in a deep sleep by Christianity. Like Brunhilde, chained to the rock, surrounded by an impenetrable mass of fire, the Greek muse had to wait henceforth for her Savior, who was to appear only after the lapse of thousands of years, to free her from her fetters. Christianity turned free human beings into hypocrites who sanctimoniously raised their eyes to heaven and did not dare to express their real opinion. At the point of the sword she forced mankind to servile subjugation and sowed the seeds of envy, jealousy, ill-will, and discord among them. Only one quality was missing at that time, a quality for which we look in vain—"Christian love!"

## 2. THE "CONVERSION" OF THE GERMANS.

The disruption of the Roman Empire and the Germanic nations arising on its ruins, represent one of the phenomena which belong to the ever-recurring events in history. Since time immemorial, nations have perished and others taken their place. This drama has repeated itself with inflexible regularity. The Egyptians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, Indians, Persians, Greeks—they all succumbed to a process of development governed by certain laws. As the single individual passes through his infancy, his youth, his prime, his decline, his senility, and finally his death, so the nations went through all those stages of development. The old die out, the young take their place.

Nevertheless, the fall of the Roman Empire has in it something unique, something that appears to have occurred only once in the history of the world. If we consider in ancient history the relationship of a subjugated nation to its conqueror, we shall always find that the former has attained a comparatively high degree of civilization, while the latter as a rule, is almost in the primitive state of nature, in the lowest stage of civilization. The natural law, governing the course of development, as described in a foregoing chapter, explains this relationship between conqueror and vanquished. The latter does not perish by the sword of the conqueror, but by internal disintegration caused by its over-ripe civilization. The juvenile vigor of the conqueror, which has not yet been enfeebled by the craving for extravagant magnificence and debauchery, combines with the centuries-old civilization of the vanquished, and from this condition arises a new culture stronger and more beautiful than that of either of their predecessors. In this way we might regard the stage of civilization of any one nation, to a certain extent, as the sum of the degree of development of former nations.

This is the natural course of development of the human race. Were this not so, were every nation compelled, on the destruction of its predecessor, to start a new civilization, independently, there could be no surety of a steady

advance of mankind. It would always reach a certain stage, merely to have to start anew again. The development of man depends on the inheritance of the culture of one nation by another.

This is the point in which the fall of the Roman Empire differs from all analogous occurrences in history. When the proud edifice collapsed, when the raging waves of northern nations deluged the mighty empire, they swallowed up the civilization of thousands of years. Invaluable treasures were lost. Art and science, everything that the human mind hitherto had produced, the entire civilization of classical antiquity, was buried under the ruins of the Roman Empire. The only thing that arose from these ruins, the only thing that was saved from the general shipwreck was—Christianity.

The German race was the heir to the sovereignty of the world. Nothing was left to them by the mighty Roman Empire, but Christianity. The art and science of the Greeks and Romans remained unknown to them. The same was true of their state's constitution, their jurisprudence, and all their social arrangements. During the following millennium they erected the structure of their own civilization, without having derived the slightest benefit from the sublime culture of classical antiquity. Their only inheritance was Christianity. How can this remarkable phenomenon be explained? How is it possible that a civilization, like that of the Romans, which was spread throughout the entire world, could absolutely perish, and nothing but a religious superstition remain alive?

One must not imagine that the fall of the Roman Empire meant that the Romans vanished from the face of the earth and that the Germans took their place. When in the year 476, the last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustus, abdicated, and Odoaker, the daring chieftain, took the reins of the government of Italy, it was not a violent outbreak that took place, not a mighty blow from without, through which the empire went to pieces. It was really only a change in the form of government. The people themselves were only indirectly affected thereby.

The Germans, also, did not appear suddenly on the scene as a wild, barbarous people. Already during the last centuries, Italy, as well as the Roman provinces, was full of Germans, who had settled there and become Roman citizens. The Roman army was made up almost entirely of Germans. Several emperors were of German descent. The flourishing Roman cities on the Rhine and on the Danube were intermediate between Roman civilization and German barbarism. And in spite of all this, Roman civilization vanished from the world almost at one blow. The Germans actually had to begin to build up their civilization from the very bottom.

They, like all other nations, had a folk-lore partly founded on historical events, which was clothed in a naïve poetical garment. Just as the legend of the labors of Hercules takes us back to pre-historic times, representing poetically the first attempts at culture made by the earliest inhabitants of Greece, so we find in the poem of the Nibelungen a mythological representation of that time which follows immediately the fall of Rome. The legends of Siegfried and the Nibelungen, of Rheingold and the Nibelung hoard refer to the heroic deeds of the Germanic tribes of that time, particularly the Franks and Burgundians, who then dwelt on the Rhine. The mythological figure of Dietrich von Bern is Theoderich the Great, king of the Goths. This is the reason why that period of history, even as late as Charles the Great, appears to us so much more distant than the times of Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, though these lived two thousand years earlier. We measure the distance of a period of time by the degree of its civilization. Socrates and Plato, as well as Cicero and Horace, are to us congenial of mind, and we therefore feel ourselves in close contact with them, while a legendary people, a mythological age, appears to be in the remote past.

All this proves, that Roman civilization vanished at one blow from the earth. And how was this possible? Civilization is transmitted spontaneously from one generation to another, and here we have a civilization which reached from the Nile to the Atlantic Ocean, from the Northern parts of Africa to the Danube.



The Romans, even in the last periods of decadence, possessed an extensive system of education. The youth were instructed in all branches of art and science. In spite of the social degeneration and the pursuit of extravagance and debauchery, general education was kept at the same high level. In the last period of the republic and the first centuries of the empire the education of the young is seen systematically advancing. How the course of general education changed in the Roman world in the span of a century, is shown by a comparison of the Catonical encyclopedia with a similar work by Varro, "On School Sciences." Cato mentioned oratory, agriculture, jurisprudence, strategy and medicine as subjects of a general, non-professional, education, while Varro places in this category, grammar, logic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, music, medicine and architecture. During the seventh century, therefore, strategy, jurisprudence and agriculture were made professional out of general studies. On the other hand, we find at Varro's time the Hellenic pedagogy already in its full development. Besides the grammatical, rhetorical philosophical course, which had been introduced into Italy even before then, there were added now the hitherto exclusively Hellenic courses of geometry, arithmetic and music. This system of instruction was continued also during the empire. The sons of well-to-do Romans, as a rule, spent several terms in Athens, there to complete their studies at the feet of the great masters. This abode of knowledge and science was sacred to the Romans. No matter how violently battles raged at different times in the empire, the school at Athens was saved from the attacks of the outer world. Outside of the city itself, away from the strife of every day life, stood the academy of the Platonists, the Lyceum of the Peripatetics, the Portico of the Stoics, and the garden of the Epicureans, all surrounded by beautiful parks, embellished by statues of the greatest masters. Here, in the most charming surroundings, under the blue skies of the south, the philosophers delivered their discourses, to which all the youths, from every part of the empire, flocked. The best of the Roman emperors gave their protection and sup-

port to this sacred abode of learning. The library founded by Hadrian was in a hall decorated with pictures and sculptures, over which was a roof of alabaster, supported by a hundred pillars of Phrygian marble. The salary of every professor of politics, rhetoric, Platonism, Peripateticism, Stoical, and Epicurean philosophy was at the time of Emperor Antoninus, ten thousand drachmas, in American money fifteen hundred dollars.

And what has become of all this splendor? How is it possible, that such a civilization could perish? Were the younger generations of the Germans absolutely incapable of education? What has become of the descendants of the thousands of Roman families, whose members were at the very top of the scientific attainment of those days?

The Roman people, as has been said, did not vanish from the earth upon the fall of the Roman Empire; but Roman civilization, Roman science, Roman pedagogy, all these certainly did vanish, as though the earth had opened and had swallowed all these spiritual treasures. And the reason for this dreadful fact, the cause of this phenomenon, unique in the history of the world is—Christianity.

Faith is the quintessence of Christianity. But the greatest foe to faith is science. Faith and science have always been irreconcilable opposites. Christ indeed "rejoiced" when he cried out, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." No one "wise and prudent" could be expected to thoroughly believe in the doctrine of Christianity. If Christianity was to win a permanent victory, science had to be suppressed. To become good Christians, mankind had to remain "babes."

Today, it seems utterly incomprehensible how it ever could have been possible to rob an entire nation of its education and scientific attainment, and to drive the people back to a state of complete ignorance and stupidity. Of course such a thing would be impossible today. To understand this correctly the conditions prevalent at that time must be carefully considered. In those days, when the art of printing had not been invented, and written books were natu-

rally very scarce, scientific knowledge could be attained only by oral instruction. The lectures of the professors were the only source of education for the students. There were only very few public libraries; private libraries, such as almost every educated person has today, were hardly obtainable even by the wealthy. An imperial order to suspend this or that branch of instruction meant the permanent annihilation of the study. Centuries ago it had become quite evident that the educated part of the public merely ridiculed and derided the fairy tale of the divine Jewish carpenter, and that it was only the uneducated class, the rabble, that could be converted to Christianity. Therefore it was decided—incredible as this may sound, henceforth to tolerate only a spiritual proletariat. All instruction in philosophy as well as in the other superior sciences was strictly forbidden. What the sword of the barbarians had always respectfully spared, was now destroyed by Christianity. Art and science not only had nothing to fear from the victorious Alexander, but he had become their enthusiastic protector, transplanting them to Egypt and the other colonies. When Greece was overpowered by the irresistible force of the Roman legions, the conquerors bowed their heads in respectful homage before the intellectual superiority of their new subjects, and gladly allowed themselves to be instructed in art and science. Cicero and Horace studied in Athens, and their example was followed by all the youths of the Roman nobility. Even the sword of the wild Goths was broken to pieces on the brazen shield of Greek science. Therefore, what all these “heathen” and “barbarians” failed to do, was done by Christianity, to which it is claimed the world owes its civilization. Emperor Justinian ordered the world-famous school at Athens closed and with it all the schools in the empire. All the “heretical” writings which had appeared as advocates and propagators of science were solemnly anathematized. Thousands of invaluable books were destroyed. Entire libraries were burned and mankind has been robbed, for all time, of a mass of the most important scientific material.

It is true, not all the books of the ancients were

destroyed at that time. Quite a number were saved and stored in monasteries, to be presented to the world a thousand years later. Christendom today boasts of this as of one of the noblest deeds. The monasteries, so it is said, have saved the old sciences from the general destruction; to Christianity we owe their preservation. Is it infantile innocence or is it intentional perversion of the facts, which spreads such views? This statement, which is used by all historians, might be compared with the following parable. A band of burglars rob a family of its most valuable treasures. Jewels of immense value, which have belonged to the family for generations, are taken by them. For several years all search for them is vain. Not a trace can be found of the burglars. Finally, after a long time, one of them is arrested; and behold—in his possession are found a string of valuable pearls and several costly diamonds, which had not yet been turned into cash. Everything else, and of course by far the greater part of the valuables, was lost. Now this burglar is praised as the noble preserver of the jewels—the family owe their jewels to him! This is exactly the relation which Christianity bears to the ancient literary works. The Christians destroyed everything they could lay hands on. Some few things, contrary to the intention of the high dignitaries, remained undisturbed, and for this we, today, should be grateful and glorify them as preservers.

From this time forth, the people were taught only what was in accordance with the Christian faith, and added to its promotion. "Heathen" literature was strictly forbidden. Works not conceived entirely in the sense of the orthodox doctrine of the Church, were stigmatized as heretical. The dominating principle was to keep the people as ignorant as possible. This is the reason that during the entire ensuing millennium most persons could neither read nor write. Why, the layman was not even permitted to read the Bible. It was, and justly, feared that an intelligent person might discover the many absurdities and contradictions contained therein.

It was not the barbarians who, with the "destruction" of

the Roman Empire, also buried the arts and sciences, the few remnants of which found a hospitable welcome in the Christian monasteries. No! This is what children are taught in school. So it is depicted by Christian historians. But the truth is that the civilization of thousands of years, the civilization of the entire classical antiquity, was murdered, intentionally murdered, by—Christianity.

And this Christianity was the only thing that the Germans inherited from the Roman Empire. "Christianity!" Who, not familiar with history, could form any idea of what this inheritance meant? Christianity—What Christianity? What kind of Christianity? In the foregoing chapters we became acquainted with a great many different things under the name of "Christianity"; beliefs and conditions as remote from one another as heaven and earth—and they were all called "Christianity."

We met a noble but naïve brotherhood of men, who abjured all personal property, who shared everything with one another, among whom there was no difference of rank or standing. On the other hand, we see a well-disciplined organization, where every degree of rank from the highest power down to the beggar is represented; where personal property was not only not abjured, but formed an essential part of the constitution. But the one as well as the other called itself "Christianity." Regarding the divine doctrine, there were not only innumerable, different forms, but every form constituted a party, which considered its own doctrine the only true one and anathematized every other. We saw how these numerous parties hated one another, how they persecuted and fought one another as though they were the deadliest enemies; and deadly enemies they were indeed, and have always remained. But they all called themselves Christians, and what they taught was Christianity. What then, was it, that the Germans inherited?

Any one who took the utterances of Christ, as well as the doctrine of the eternal kingdom of God, seriously and believed in them literally, was bound to recognize the enormous contradiction between these religious ideas and everyday life as it was formed by social conditions. On the one

hand, they were told that no rich man could ever enter the kingdom of heaven; on the other they saw how everyone struggled for wealth and power. On the one hand, it was said, "the last shall be first," and on the other, everyone strove frantically against belonging to the last, and put his every energy into attaining power and supremacy. What is this short earthly life when compared to eternity? What compensation could the very greatest benefits of this world give him who would thereby be doomed to "eternal damnation?" How sweet must the bitterest privations, the most dreadful agonies, have appeared to him who believed thereby to attain "eternal salvation"! Such considerations are absolutely logical, and the eccentricities resulting therefrom are far less strange than the inconceivable indifference shown by the great mass of believers to this obvious contradiction.

But not all Christians acted thus indifferently towards such reflections. From the very beginning, there were people who, according to the Christian doctrine looked upon their lives merely as a short period of probation, and therefore were ready to do anything to secure good seats in heaven: nay, if possible, to enter there as "saints." So long as the persecutions of the Christians under the Roman emperors took place, frequent opportunities were offered to people so minded to insure eternal salvation by a heroic martyr's death. It is, indeed, astounding to note with what cold-bloodedness and will-power these enthusiasts suffered the most frightful tortures and agonies. With faces wreathed in smiles and eyes cast towards heaven, they endured tortures which only the most refined viciousness of human brutality could conceive. But since Christianity had arrived at might and power, since the Christians, instead of dying martyrs' deaths, massacred the "infidel" Jews and pagans, "in honor of our Lord Jesus Christ," those pious men had to seek other means to secure eternal salvation. The world with its idle vanities, with its struggle for earthly power and aggrandizement, was in their eyes nothing but forbidden fruit, for the tasting of which they had to pay with eternal damnation. So they endeavored to withdraw

entirely from the world, to spend a solitary life far from the strife and turmoil of sinful humanity, giving up all vanities and preparing themselves for a better world by castigations and endless prayers.

Similar tendencies existed in the Orient even before the appearance of Christianity. Already then there were "hermits," who believed that by depriving themselves of all pleasures, by fasting, praying and self-castigation, they would attain a higher state of being. Now this endeavor was stimulated and strengthened by Christianity. A great number of "ascetics" lived, at first in the wilderness of Egypt, later on in all parts of the world. The most celebrated of these is Antonius (St. Anthony), who lived in Egypt in the third century. The desire to secure salvation by self-castigation and privations led to the most insane extravagances. Many anchorites lived like wild beasts, in caves or even in trees, subsisting on herbs and leaves. Others scourged themselves with whips until their flesh hung in shreds. The numerous "Boskoi" (grazers) received their name from the fact that they grazed in the fields of Mesopotamia amongst the herds, and groveled in the mud. There was a particular class of ascetics, called the "Stylites." The first of this class was a hermit born in Sisan, Assyria, in the fifth century, called Simeon. This remarkable person lived at first in a cave in the hills, where he spent his time in praying and fasting. A fast of forty days, in celebration of lent, nearly cost him his life. He then immured himself in a structure made of stone, which measured only a few feet in diameter and was open at the top, so that he was always exposed to the sun and the rain. After having lived here three years he went to the top of a mountain, where for several years he remained, chained to a rock. His fame having widely spread, a crowd of curious people flocked to see him. Being annoyed by this he erected a pillar, building it higher and higher until it finally reached a height of forty feet. The top of the pillar measured three feet in diameter, and was surrounded by a railing. Here he stood, day and night, in the extremes of heat and cold. During the night until nine o'clock in the

morning, he prayed incessantly, at the same time stretching out his arms and bending his head toward the ground until it nearly touched his feet. An observer once counted these movements, continued uninterruptedly, until he reached 1244. At nine o'clock he began to preach to the assembled crowd, and to send messengers to churches, bishops, and even to the emperor. Towards evening he severed his connection with the earthly world, so as to communicate with God undisturbed until the following morning. He is said to have taken nourishment only once a week. A sheepskin was his only garment. Emaciated almost to a skeleton, he is said to have spent thirty-seven years in this manner, until, in his sixty-ninth year, he died in the attitude of prayer.

From near and far pilgrimages were made to this "holy man" for the purpose of receiving his blessing. Many Persians, Armenians, and Iberians, as well as the whole nation of Lazeroirs in Colchis were converted to Christianity by him. Many princes and princesses came from Arabia to be blessed by him. The Emperor Theodosius the Younger, as well as Emperor Leo, sought his advice and implored his blessing.

Under the name St. Simeon Stylites this remarkable man was enrolled among the host of "saints," and many pious Christians followed his example and spent their lives, as he had done, on a pillar. The "Stylites," therefore, form a special class and can be traced down to the twelfth century.

Although eccentricities, like the above case, have the appearance of insanity, still one must always bear in mind that the desire for solitude, contempt for the world as well as self-castigation of any sort, are logical results of the Christian doctrine, and it is therefore by no means astonishing that the tendency towards a life of complete isolation continually assumed greater dimensions. In time there developed groups or clans of these hermits, (Greek *μοναχοί*) and therefrom "Monks"), who lived first in huts, and then in regular buildings. With them originated those institutions which were destined to exert such enormous influence on the development of Christianity, the monasteries. Orig-



inally, monasteries represented a voluntary union of hermits, no one of whom owed any duty to the general body. What he did was of his own free will. Everyone was at liberty to remain in the monastery as long as he chose to do so, or to leave it whenever he changed his mind. In consequence of the great number of nuisances and abuses due to this liberty, stricter rules were made later on. After a certain time of probation the "novice" had to declare whether he wished to remain in the monastery permanently or not. In case he decided affirmatively, he had to take an oath of allegiance and obedience which chained him for the rest of his life to the monastery. No power could release him from this oath, which was legally binding before the state as well as the Church. A person trying to escape and caught by the authorities was returned to the monastery to which he belonged, where the most severe punishment awaited him.

While isolated anchorites hoped to secure their salvation by voluntary renunciations and self-castigations, the chief duty of the monastical monk was obedience. Absolute obedience had to be given to the commands and instructions of the chief of the monastery, the "abbot," no matter how absurd and ridiculous the same might be. The slightest opposition, if only a murmur or hesitation in the execution of a command, was considered a sin and was severely punished by solitary confinement, long fasts, or castigation. Some abbots deemed it advisable to punish their monks by inflicting bodily mutilations, such as cutting off single members of the body, or piercing the eyes. Blind obedience was the greatest virtue, even if the command called for a crime in its execution.

At the definitive entrance into the community of monks, the novice had to convey all his property to the monastery. Therefore these grew richer and richer as time passed. They were particularly anxious to possess as much real estate as possible, because this gave them a permanent income. It was therefore to the interest of monasteries to induce as many of the sons and daughters of wealthy families to enter them, as possible, which was done extensively.

On the other hand, the monasteries became the refuge for a great mass of the proletariat, who preferred to lead the lonely though hard life of seclusion to braving the battles and storms of the outer world. So great was the trend of this class of persons to monasteries, and such were the motives that led to them, that the Emperor Mauritius found it necessary to issue an edict forbidding entrance to a monastery to anyone who had unpaid debts in the outer world, and to those who had deserted from the army. A lengthy quarrel between him and pope Gregory I. ensued from this edict, with the latter part of which the pope had been displeased.

The chief occupation of the monks was, of course, praying. But besides this, they were kept at regular work according to their abilities and their callings. Many had learned a trade, which enabled them to provide their clothing and other necessities of daily life. Others were engaged in agriculture, tended the gardens, and occupied themselves with raising flowers and other useful things. In this way, every monastery was a sort of communistic society. No one had personal property. The work done by each individual was for the benefit of the community. The form of government was that of an absolute monarchy. The abbot had unlimited power within his monastery. He appointed his officers and exercised the strictest discipline.

But besides the abbot, the officers and the monks, there were other dwellers in the monastery. They, however, did not work; they neither ate nor drank. They took no interest in life, neither inside nor outside the monastery. No one showed any interest in them. In time they were completely forgotten. They were sunk in a deep sleep, and no one would have dreamt of awaking them. The younger generations looked at them with fear and awe, and were afraid when in their presence. The great, dark vault in which they were imprisoned and to which one of the brethren kept the keys, was covered with the dust of centuries. Over their bodies spiders had spun their webs. Decades, centuries passed by, and no one dared to disturb their sleep. Occasionally one of the younger monks, overcome with

curiosity, would ask the white-haired brother with the long beard and the great bunch of keys at his girdle, what was hidden in that huge vault, and who was living there? With a solemn look the senior shook his head, and laid a finger on his lips, so that no sound should awaken the sleepers: "Heathen," he then whispered, "Heathen." "They knew nothing of our Lord, Jesus Christ," continued the old man mysteriously, while he crossed himself. "Their souls can never be resurrected, no salvation, no kingdom of heaven. Heathen, wicked heathen." The young monk shuddered. "Why," he asked with trembling voice, "are they kept here in this sacred place?" The old man shook his head and murmured something about the great shipwreck and Christian love.

Alas! when the lofty ship was crushed, when the Roman Empire disrupted, they, too, perished with it all. The great geniuses, the poets, Homer, Sophocles, Æschylos, and all the others; the philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; the artists, Phidias, Praxiteles; all the great statesmen, orators, commanders—they all went down with the sinking ship. But just in time, before they were forever engulfed in the depths of the sea, the good Samaritans came and saved them from eternal death. Carefully they carried the exhausted heroes from the raging flood, from the seething waves, and laid them lovingly in the great vaults of the venerable monasteries. Here they slept undisturbed. The old ship had long been forgotten; even the storm that destroyed it had faded into the background of memory. New generations came and went. New storms shook the world to its foundation. But those heroes slept on peacefully, undisturbed, unmolested. They have slept there a thousand years. Then suddenly a new storm arose, more fierce and violent than any the world had ever seen. It made the whole structure tremble and creak, till, with the roar of thunder, it crashed together, burying everything beneath its ruins. But alas! Behold—what a miracle! From underneath those crushing ruins they arise once more to new and vigorous life. Those old heroes! Those heathens! After a millennium of death-like sleep they cele-

brate their resurrection, their regeneration, their renaissance! Those heathens! That desolation of a thousand years, that darkness, that nightly terror, they illuminate again by a glorious light. With the torch of wisdom, with the fire of art, they again warm the heart of mankind, and once more erect the world's long forgotten ideals—those heathen, those wicked heathen.

Wherever an active propagation of Christianity took place, it rested on two motives. Firstly, honest, sincere faith in the divinity of Christ and in the entire Christian doctrine. We see those champions of Christianity most innocently shudder at the horrible superstitions of the "pagans," persecuting the disgraceful idolatry, and destroying the heathen idols with fanatic fury. These same enthusiasts we see, however, in fervent prayer, on their knees before the image of some holy Catherine, carrying a hollow molar of Saint Amandus on their chest, faithfully trusting in the miraculous power of this relic. The second motive is the struggle for power and supremacy, in the organized clergy as well as in secular states, the rulers of which made use of Christianity as a powerful weapon. These two motives formed the mainspring of all the efforts at conversion, made by the Christians—religious superstition and power over their fellow-men.

An illustration of the fact that this pious superstition can be combined with the most conscientious exercise of the highest supremacy, is given by Pope Gregory I., surnamed the Great. In him we see a man with the most excellent traits of character. The considerable fortune left him by his father he used almost exclusively for acts of charity and pious endowments. His charity to the poor was unaffected and was prompted by the goodness of his heart. He was a real friend and father to the poor. He also used the wealth of the Church for charitable purposes. He had corn sent from Sicily and distributed it among the poor. He built hospitals and monasteries and had thousands of needy persons supplied with food and money. He did all this, not as so many others did, from motives of personal interest and diplomacy, but because he was gen-

uinely kind and sympathetic. He even had the synagogue of the Jews restored, after it had been destroyed, saying that unbelievers should not be converted to Christianity by force, but by love.

In religious matters he manifested the most orthodox faith in all the naïve superstitions and considered every one who uttered the slightest doubt as to the absolute truth of these things, a miserable heretic. He had, for instance, an extensive controversy with the Patriarch of Constantinople, Eutychius, who had expressed the opinion that the bodies of saints, after their resurrection, were no longer made up of perceptible matter, but were composed of a material still finer than atmospheric air. Gregory was exceedingly wrought up about this "frightful error" and in a series of debates, which were partly of a private nature and partly held in the presence of the emperor, he "proved" that the bodies of the saints, after their resurrection, would be the same as they were on earth, only with this difference—that they had become immortal. The bodies of the saints would be just as material as that of Jesus Christ after his resurrection.

Remembering the words of Christ, that one should humble and humiliate one's self, he went to the greatest extremes in this respect. In his letters he frequently calls himself "the meanest person, consumed by laziness and inertia." He wrote to St. Leander that he wanted to be despised and shunned by all mankind. Nevertheless, he insisted on strict discipline among the clergy, whose head he was. He also tolerated no contradiction, and was exceedingly impatient of every difference of opinion.

Even though these traits represent an apparent contradiction, they are still the logical consequence of his orthodox faith. The words of Christ, that he would build his Church on the rock of Peter, he construed to the effect that Peter, as well as his successors, of whom he himself was one, constituted the highest authority in the Church. These supreme servants of Christ received direct inspiration from their Lord. In this way he combined these apparently

contradictory qualities, the lowest humility with the highest autocracy.

He sent the empress a veil which was supposed to have touched the bodies of the apostles, and assured her that this object was capable of performing great miracles. At the same time he promised to send her particles of dust from the chains of St. Paul, which were also miracle-workers. To the young son of Theodelinda, the queen of the Lombards, he sent a small cross, which was supposed to contain a splinter from the cross of Christ, with the direction to wear it around his neck as a sure means of protection against Satan. On the other hand, he had the idolatry of apostates strenuously persecuted as a "diabolical superstition."

These two qualities which we thus find combined in Gregory constituted the characteristic features of Christianity of those days—a multitude of the most naïve superstitions and an organization struggling for supremacy, which, through this superstition as well as by forcible measures, forced the people to obedience. This was the inheritance which the Germanic tribes received from the collapsing Roman Empire. Of course, in school children are taught differently. In every book of history, the great theme is the "ennobling influence" which Christianity exercised on the barbarous nations. "Aside," so it says in one of the popular historical works, "from the purely religious influence of Christianity on individuals, it cannot be denied that the Germans were led from brutality to education by the religion of love and truth, which opened to them a spiritual struggle and led them to aims and ideals more worthy and noble than sensual pleasures and worldly possessions." Such lies they dare to tell the children in school. "The religion of love and truth."

To the examples given in foregoing chapters, we could add quite a number, to show that Christianity did not hesitate to make saints of the most execrable criminals, if only these were "pious" and obedient, thus becoming valuable supporters of Roman authority. Remember the empress who had the eyes of her son put out, and had a large num-

ber of her relatives mutilated, so as to secure her own power, but who, because in the schism of the church she took the part of the pope and sanctioned the worship of images, was honored by the pope with the title of a "pious and holy princess." Remember all those criminals who were made saints by the church, because they were useful to the clergy. Just think of that despicable, debauched emperor, Gratian, who was hated and despised by the people and the army, but upon whom the great Bishop Ambrosius "conferred" a seat of honor in heaven because he was an obedient pupil of the priests. On the other hand, remember the many worthy and honorable men, who were abominably abused by the Christian Church, nay, tortured and executed, because they dared to oppose some nonsensical opinion or custom.

Another excellent illustration of the fact that the Church palliated even the most shocking crimes, if committed by some one of use to her, is offered by the strong and energetic, though cruel and dishonorable Clovis, king of the Franks. Let us hear in this matter that same historian from whose lips we but now heard "the religion of love and truth" praised so highly. "His last years," he says, "Clovis spent in getting the entire nation of Franks into his power, for besides him there were other kings from the old Merovingian house—Siegebert, Chavarich, Ragnachar, all distinguished by their long, curly, uncut hair. By cruel treachery he managed to get them all out of the way. He instigated against Siegebert of Cologne his own son, who was ambitious to become king himself. When the patricide was accomplished and the treasures of the murdered man were to be divided, he had the murderer killed by a blow from a battle-ax, dealt from behind. He then had himself raised on the shield by the Ripuarians, and proclaimed king. Chavarich, whose domain cannot be definitely located, and who did not send reinforcements to Syagrias, was, with his son, shorn of his hair and thrust into a monastery. But when the son spoke comfortingly to the father, saying, 'The foliage has fallen from the green tree, soon the leaves may

grow again,' both were put to death. This part of Francia also was appropriated by Clovis."

Ragnachar was hated by his subjects for his debaucheries. Clovis bribed several of them with brazen weapons, which he pretended were gold, to desert their king in battle and bring him and his brother Rishar, bound, before the conqueror. With simulated scorn he cried to Ragnachar: "How could you so disgrace our house as to allow yourself to be bound?" With these words he felled him to the earth. And to the brother he continued: "And if you had stood by your brother, he would certainly not have been bound." Him, too, he slew. But to those whom he had deceived with brazen weapons, he declared that betrayers deserved no better reward. A third brother, Rignomer, likewise was put out of the way. Gregory of Tours adds: "He had many other kings put to death, even his own relatives who, he feared, might want to take his life. Nay, to discover if anyone still remained, he complained at a gathering: 'Alas, woe to me, that I am now like a stranger among strangers, that no one will help me in my need.'" But in the eyes of the Catholic clergy such conduct did not detract from his glory. "So God brought down every day," Gregory said most innocently, "his enemies under his hand, because he walked with upright heart before him, which was pleasing to the Lord."

Our friend, the great historian, shows his astonishment about the "naïve" Gregory, who makes even God a murderer to palliate the acts of the Christian king. But we will remind the learned historian that Pope Anastasius was even so "naïve" as to confer upon this monster the title of the "most Christian," and that the "saint" Bishop Remigius honored him with all the distinctions he had at his disposal. It is true, however, this "pious king" gave Saint Remigius much property, and built many churches.

Any one acquainted with history, and honest, will not be astounded at all. On the contrary, he will know that since time immemorial the most unscrupulous rascals and the lowest criminals have been made "saints" and "most Christian kings" by the Church, so long as they served her and



put their fortunes at her disposal. Where, in all this, are the "ennobling" influences of Christianity? How was Clovis "led from barbarism to civilization" by Christianity?

He even committed all those atrocities during the last years of his life, after having received the "holy baptism," by which we don't mean to infer that he was more decent before being baptized. How miserable is Clovis' very conversion to Christianity. After all the attempts made by his Christian wife, St. Clothilde, to convert him to Christianity had been fruitless; after the Christian ecclesiastics had tried in vain to accomplish this, it happened during the battle of Zulpich, in which his whole kingdom was at stake, that his infantry, commanded by his cousin Sigebert, was routed, and that in consequence of this the combined fury of the Suaves and Alemans threw itself on him and his cavalry. In spite of his personal bravery, in spite of the straining of all his energies to stop his fleeing troops and encourage them anew to battle, they had to succumb to the frightful onslaught of the enemy, and his last hope of saving his empire and his life seemed gone. Just then he recalled the words of his wife, and cried out: "Christ, to whom Clothilde prays as the son of the living God, I implore thee, stand by me. I have appealed to my own Gods, but see that they are powerless. Therefore, I come to thee. I will believe in thee. Save me from my enemies, and I will have myself baptized in thy name." No sooner had these words escaped his lips, than his cavalry gathered about him, prepared to make a new attack. They fell upon the enemy. The commander of the opposing army sank to the earth, mortally wounded. His army began to retreat, threw away their weapons, and begged the victor for mercy. Clovis remembered this glorious day, for soon thereafter he kept his word and had himself baptized. What splendid bargaining: "If you save my kingdom, I will be baptized in your name." Undoubtedly other people, too, would have been willing to be baptized for a kingdom. A good many would indeed do it for much less.

To avoid all misunderstanding, we want to emphasize the fact that the gradual ennoblement of these wild Ger-

mans is certainly not questioned by anyone. It would indeed be sad, if just this great race had not been ennobled in the course of time. Have, indeed, not all the nations of history advanced gradually? When the Pelasgians in ancient times made their entry into Greece, they too were in a state of uncouth naturalism, and from them developed the flower of art and science. The Romans and all other nations have gone through this process of development. That the Germans improved likewise is quite natural and not astonishing.

The question of importance to us is, therefore, not whether the Germans developed from a state of rough barbarism to one of higher civilization, but, What role did Christianity play in this process of ennoblement? Were the Germans ennobled by Christianity, or in spite of it?

The Goths were the first of all the German tribes to be converted to Christianity. Their conversion was particularly pushed by the energetic Bishop Ulfilas, whose translation of the Bible is the first literary production in the Gothic language. This example was soon followed by the other barbarians, who settled on the ruins of the West-Roman Empire. The Burgunds in Gallia, the Suaves in Spain, the Vandals in Africa, the East-Goths in Pannonia—all were converted to Christianity.

The motives which induced the barbarians, in the various cases, to adopt Christianity were manifold. Frequently it was pure accident, such as the fulfillment of a prophecy or the realization of a dream, which accomplished the conversion. In other cases it was the persuasive power of the missionaries, the "miracles" of Christian priests, the reference to the Christian throne in Constantinople, which led to the desired goal. The barbarians completely lacking education, there could, naturally, be no question of actual understanding. What should an uncouth German, who could neither write nor read, make of the Trinity? They were, of course, as little as possible told of all this. They were merely baptized, and then became good Christians, who, above all things else, had to obey their priests. Even the strict observance of ritual usages was not deemed of so

much importance as the blind obedience which, as good Christians, they owed to the Church.

Thus heathen and Christian customs were frequently intermingled in the most remarkable way. It frequently happened that sacrificial feasts were held in the Christian church and plays produced there, as had been the custom on heathen holidays. It even happened that Christian priests performed heathen sacrifices. In fact, many did not know whether they were pagans or Christians, whether they were baptized or not, for the Germans had a ceremony similar to baptism.

The main motive, however, was the vivid description given of the hereafter in the kingdom of God, as well as the fear created in those big Germans, of eternal damnation in the fires of hell. Christian baptism, they were told, saves the soul from the fires of hell and leads it to eternal salvation.

But when the good Germans thought that at last they had secured the salvation of their souls, there came a bitter disappointment. Bishop Ulfilas had twice been in Constantinople as the ambassador of his Goths to negotiate treaties of peace with Emperor Valens. As the reader will remember, there were two parties opposed to each other in Constantinople, the "Blue" and the "Green," that is, the Roman Catholics and the Arians. The latter had always been the more powerful party in the Eastern Roman Empire, and thus it came that Ulphilas also had become an Arian. The honest Germans, who knew absolutely nothing about Christianity, naturally had not the faintest idea of the existence of these two parties; and even if they had known something about it, how should they have understood their respective issues? Just tell a cab-driver today something about the dual nature of Christ, and see how much of it he will understand. And how much higher is the degree of culture of this cab-driver than was that of the Germans of that time. But be that as it may, the Germans, *nolens volens*, had become Arians.

But, when the Germans firmly believed that they had secured the safety of their souls, a frightful storm arose

from the Apostolic See in Rome. "You miserable heretics," he thundered, "you are much worse than the worst heathen. You shall be accursed for all eternity, and in the fires of hell your souls shall do penance for your heresy." This was a little too much for the Germans. They had no education wherewith to form their own opinions about the controversies at issue, but they had common sense. Infuriated, they saw through the priestly swindle with which it was desired to befool them. At first they had endeavored to convince them that all their ancestors were in hell and could be released only by Christian deeds of their descendants, and now they were told that they too were doomed to eternal damnation. They refused to give up the faith they had adopted, and so the Goths, the Burgundians, the Suaves, and the Vandals remained Arians. And now arose the great struggle between them and the Catholics, which was to grow the more violent, as one of the most powerful German princes, the aforementioned Clovis, had adopted the Catholic faith. This was one of the many Christian religious wars, which followed one another in an almost unbroken chain.

The atrocities committed therein, in the name of the Christian religion, are utterly inhuman. Bodily mutilations, the death penalty, the burning of living beings at the stake, were everyday occurrences. Prominent citizens, respectable women and girls, were raised naked into the air by a compound pulley, heavy weights attached to their feet, and kept in this terrible position. Thousands of persons were brutally tortured, mutilated, and burned at the stake. That Oriental barbarism, the cutting off of ears, nose, and tongue, was practiced by Christians on their Christian brethren. In short, every cruelty and every barbarism that the human mind could conceive, was perpetrated here in religious fanaticism, "in honor of the Lord, Jesus Christ." These struggles continued until finally the kingdoms of the Vandals and the East-Goths were destroyed and Arianism thereby found its end.

There was only one of all the many German tribes which remained true to the old traditions, over which Christianity had until this time attained no power. This was the Saxon

people. By this we do not mean the small remnant of the Saxons of today, but what is at present nearly the whole of the German people. This nation consisted of three tribes, the Westphalians, who inhabited the country from the Rhine to the Weser, the Eastphalians, between the Weser and the Elbe, and the Engern, who occupied the land up to the North Sea. These old Saxons had, until the time of Charles the Great, that is, until the end of the eighth century, retained the same constitution and mode of life that had been described by Tacitus. They were made of the same stuff as their ancestors, who once maintained their freedom against the Romans, always preferring death to the Roman yoke. Liberty was dearer to them than aught else. They chose a leader only in times of war. In times of peace they were all equals. They still worshiped Werodan, the God of their ancestors, as well as Er, the God of war, clinging to their inherited faith, and to liberty with constant loyalty and valor.

Few events in history have been so misrepresented as the subjugation of this brave people. "Plunder expeditions" into the country of the Franks are said to be the reason why Charles the Great was forced to punish his neighbors. "It requires, therefore," says a well known historian, "no justification and far less an excuse because of these wars; but he did not appear merely as conqueror; it was his heart's desire to bring to them the gospel, the peaceable adoption of which they still continued to refuse, and the priests pronounced the war a pious deed." Is it infamy or ignorance that speaks thus?

The actual state of affairs was the following: Charles was originally king of the Franks. His kingdom corresponded about to the territory of modern France. He was one of those conquerors of the world who considered it their life-task to unite all mankind under the power of their swords. Alexander the Great and Napoleon were men of the type of Charles the Great. He carried his victorious arms over the Pyrenees, far into Spain. He conquered the Longobards and set their iron crown upon his own head. He subjugated all of Italy, and even succeeded in

overthrowing the wild Huns in Hungary, the descendants of Attila. Naturally, he cast his eye on the most powerful of all his neighbors, the Saxons, who lived on the other side of the Rhine. To conquer their land, too, and to subjugate this strong people to his power was the most fervent desire of his life.

When in the year 772 Charles had celebrated Easter in Heristall and had attended the annual meeting at Worms, he led his army across the Rhine and forced his way into the land of the Westphalians, destroying everything about him with fire and sword. In the very heart of Saxony stood the holy Eresburg, which was strongly fortified on the one side and protected on the other by a steep mountain. On the top of the mountain in a sacred forest stood the Irmensul, the pillar of Irma, the most sacred sanctuary of the Germans. The Franks stormed the Eresburg and stole the valuable hoard which was guarded there by the Irmen-sul. For three days they rioted there, despoiling and burning everything sacred to the Saxons.

Then ensued that frightful war, which the brave Saxons carried on in desperation, trying to save their liberty and their religion. As their ancestors had once congregated about their leader, Hermann, to resist the power of the Roman emperor, so they now fought under their hero, Widukind, against that king of the Franks who had penetrated into their country to rob them of their freedom. This unequal struggle lasted thirty years. No defeat, no want, no privations could lessen the courage of this brave people. They always gathered new strength wherewith to defend their country and their honor, and to maintain their freedom, prized by them above all else.

As the three hundred Spartans chose to perish, sword in hand, rather than surrender to the enemy, so those valiant Saxons kept up a hopeless struggle, preferring to die like heroes rather than to give up their liberty. After a battle in which he was victorious Charles had forty-five hundred of the most prominent Saxons executed in one day. This wholesale murder, this inhuman crime of the Christian king, according to modern historians, needs "no justi-

fication, far less excuse," for "the priests declared this a pious deed."

Even this atrocity did not discourage those heroes from continuing their struggle for freedom. Thousands and thousands of them covered the gruesome field of battle. As long as enough of those valiant men remained alive to continue the fight against the intruding tyrant, those noble heroes kept their ground. Only after their leaders had been hewn down, after a most honorable struggle to the death, lasting thirty years, the small remnant left of this valiant people had to succumb. Charles had to re-people the country after having devastated it for thirty years.

On the lower Rhine a noble monument has been erected by the Germans to the memory of the hero who, two thousand years ago, successfully defended his country against the Roman invasions. This monument does honor to the German nation. It shows that still today they are grateful to those valiant heroes who guarded the German Fatherland and German honor against destruction.

What monument has history erected to the memory of those brave Saxons, who with equal heroism opposed the Frankish conqueror? Is it possible? Can it be true? Disdain and contempt are offered to these heroes by posterity? "Miserable heathen," "Barbarians," "Traitors," so the German nation calls its brave ancestors, who defended their country against the Frankish tyrant? And they do not even blush in doing so? "Traitors!" Yes, so they are called in all books of history, because the victorious king who brought them to subjection wrung concessions from them; because they tried again and again to shake off this intolerable yoke. Traitors! When, a thousand years later, another usurper came from France to subjugate Germany, did the German people not act in precisely the same manner? Did the Germans at that time not shake off the foreign yoke from their shoulders in the same way? And were they therefore traitors? Or are they honored to the present day as heroes and saviors of their fatherland? Ah! But the Saxons were heathens. And the destruction of these heathen was a "pious deed." The frightful devastations,

slaughters and murders of this "Christian king" were "pious acts." To destroy and annihilate anything that was "heathen" was considered a real Christian act. Thus did Christianity "ennoble" the barbarians. This is the history of the conversion of the Saxons to Christianity.

Charles, the king of the Franks, who conquered nearly all of Europe and united it under his scepter, on whose head the pope placed the imperial crown, whom history has given the surname of the "Great," was, indeed, a great man; not only as a conqueror, but as an organizer, law-maker and educator. Those frightful cruelties at which every humane feeling must revolt in horror, were not the work of his personality. It was Christianity that spoke in him. Charles was a "good Christian," and for this reason he performed all those cruel "pious deeds," instigated by the priests. For the same reason he resolved either to convert the Saxons to Christianity or to completely exterminate them. This is what Christianity wants; this is Christian love; this the uplifting of mankind.

Such was the manner in which the various tribes of the Germans were "converted." The Goths and the Vandals, after having adopted Christianity, were destroyed as "miserable heretics," and the Saxons were almost entirely exterminated because they did not wish to give up their liberty. "Conversion" was accomplished far more frequently by the sword than by the cross. Baptism or death was the alternative which Christian love put to the heathens. Even as late as the twelfth century the Wends were "converted" by this method.

On how low a level Christianity stood philosophically, and how it really differed in no way from the despised heathenism, is shown by the way baptism was administered to those who were converted, and what baptismal vows were demanded of them. There was no idea that the gods of the Germans, like those of all other ancient nations, were the product of the human imagination, and consequently did not exist at all; no, they were considered evil spirits, consorts of the devil. Therefore those who were converted had not only to repudiate their gods, with all due formalities,



but to solemnly curse them and to declare their sacrifices to be sacrifices to Satan.

With the ceremony of baptism and the abjuration of the ancient gods, the "ennobling" process was complete. There was no question of educating the people during the whole course of the Middle Ages. That which was called education was in the hands of the clergy. The layman was to learn only what was necessary to make him a good, that is, obedient, Christian. Reading and writing were not essential to this. In fact, nothing was, and there it ended. At an assembly of the imperial states, in the year 802, it was decided that every layman should learn by heart the Lord's prayer and the Confession of Faith. This regulation was strictly enforced. Men and women were punished by fasts and whippings if they were unable to recite these pieces. How the old Saxons must have enjoyed this ennobling process! The fathomless ignorance in which the people were intentionally kept during the entire period of the Middle Ages is too well known to need special description here.

The conception that the people had of Christ was in no way consistent with historical facts. In the most important epoch of the Middle Ages, the "Savior," Christ is depicted as "the mighty, the famous prince, the most powerful of all kings, the amiable host who likes to accommodate many knights and promises them protection for a long period, as he is well able to do. His disciples are his warriors and his servants loyal knights, nobly born men, famed for their strength. God is the exalted King of Heaven, the conquering prince, the mighty protector, who from his celestial abode governs everything, the land and the people. Men shall serve him and be loyal to him. Then shall they share in the heavenly kingdom, their home shall be the possession up there on the green meadow of God, then they will be in his power, enjoying with their master the most blessed life, winning his grace and eternal glory. Wherein does this form of Christianity differ from paganism, except in name? God—Wuodan—Christ—Saxnot!

While the education, or rather the prevention of educa-

tion, of the people, was in the hands of the clergy, science was also exclusively in the hands of the priests. But the conception of science, too, became totally changed with the spread of Christianity. The ideal and aim of science consisted no longer of a constant progress and development of knowledge in the various fields of study and research, but merely in the study of all those things which were in direct connection with Christianity. Anything that in any way disagreed with the Christian doctrine, was condemned as heretical. The "heathen" philosophy of the Greeks and Romans was the work of Satan. All natural sciences, the results of which necessarily came in conflict with the Bible, were condemned as heresy. No one dared to express an opinion which did not coincide with the naïve and superstitious doctrine of the "Holy Scriptures." As late as the seventeenth century, that is over a hundred years after the beginning of the Reformation, the great physicist Galileo was condemned by the Inquisition because he defended the Copernican doctrine that the earth moves around the sun. All natural sciences were, therefore, practically destroyed. The scientific achievements of the classical ages of antiquity, the discoveries and inventions of the Greeks and Romans—all these were dead and buried—damnable heresy, deceit of hell. Mankind owes it to Christianity that more than a millennium had to elapse before the sciences revived and started anew from that state in which they were at the time of the fall of the Roman Empire. In all branches of science, theoretical as well as practical, the Romans had attained a height to which one did not dare to aspire, until in the eighteenth century, when the dead-weight on all scientific thoughts, Christianity, began to exert a less pressure on mankind. Even in technical achievements, of which we are so proud today, the Romans were far more advanced than is generally supposed. In the writings of Hero of Alexandria, we find the description of a great many machines, which were to be reinvented only in the nineteenth century. Among them an automaton into which a drachma is thrown for the purpose of catching up a few drops of holy water; mechanical devices for playing wind instruments, and last but not least, a steam en-

gine. And all this was buried for over a thousand years by the pious Christians! What a "blessing" for mankind! What an "ennobling" of humanity!

The clergy has always been under its own jurisdiction. In time the Church expanded its jurisdiction also over the laity, claiming that every crime broke not only human but divine laws.

Characteristic of the spirit that reigned in the Christian religion, was the fact that protracted prayers were one of the most general punishments inflicted for various offenses. To repeat 1200 psalms, kneeling, 1680 standing, was equivalent to living for a month exclusively on bread and water. Other punishments were the senseless babbling of so and so many Paternosters and Ave Marias.

In all Christian German states the Church became the greatest owner of real estate, which meant that it had the greatest political power. As a rule she owned one-third of the land, often even more.

At the head of all Christendom stood the pope, in Rome, to whom God had entrusted the care of the entire Church. The pope became the representative of Christ on earth. By him the power was transferred to the officials of the Church, first of all to the metropolitans, who brought about the union of the bishops in the various dioceses, and by them to the lower officials. This great system, spread over the whole world, with its complicated organization and iron discipline, represented a power the like of which the world had never dreamed. Kings and princes had to bow to it. From the crowned head of the reigning prince to the beggar in his rags, every individual in every Christian state, rich or poor, young or old, man or woman, had to obey the mandates of the Church. Alas, for him who dared even ever so little to act in opposition to their orders. Every utterance of an opinion opposing the Roman doctrine was pronounced a heresy, and its utterer punished as a heretic. Mere penalty of death was one of the mildest forms of Christian revenge. Every torture that the human mind could conjure up was employed to lead heretics back to the "right way," and to uphold the authority of the Church.

Such was the wonderful Christianity that the Germans inherited from the Roman Empire. Such were the measures by which Christianity "ennobled" and "civilized" the "heathenish" Germans.

### 3. CHRISTIANITY IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

In the foregoing chapters the variability of the conception of "Christianity" has been repeatedly pointed out. To avoid all misunderstanding, we must emphasize again that by "Christianity" we understand all those things which on the one hand belong to the purely religious dogma, and on the other constitute all the formalities, the ceremonies, the organization of the clergy and the relation of the hierarchy to the state institutions. Christianity is, therefore, no stable conception, such as a phenomenon of nature would be, but is a manifestation founded on pure convention, which in the course of history is constantly undergoing changes and is dependent on the views and regulations of the Christian dignitaries at any particular time.

After the most terrible wars, after frightful bloodshed, after brutal massacres and the torturing to death of hundreds of thousands of people, the Christian rulers finally succeeded in "converting" by far the greater part of Europe to Christianity and in bringing about that state of affairs existing at the time of Charles the Great, described in the preceding chapter.

History justly designates the millennium lying between the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the beginning of the Reformation as the "dark" period of the Middle Ages. Dark! Indeed, dark! Every other period of history, no matter how sad the events that characterize it, no matter how great the ruin, has still some bright aspects. Nowhere is there to be found such total devastation, as in these miserable Middle Ages. And not one nation, alone, was affected in this way. No, nearly all of Europe, all the nations that were "converted" to Christianity, were overtaken by the same fate. They were all condemned to pass through those long, frightful thousand years, those awful Middle Ages, unique in the history of the world.

We have several times pointed out, how all the ancient nations, with iron regularity, went through a certain inevitable process of development. Every one of these nations, from a state of uncouth barbarism, attained, in a comparatively short time, the height of a flourishing civilization, from which it invariably gradually retrograded. We attempted to show that it was not mere accident that caused all these nations to go through the same process of development, but rather that certain fixed laws were responsible for this phenomenon. As we have seen, Christianity destroyed the entire civilization of the ancient world, so that the nations of Europe, after the fall of the Roman Empire, had to build up a new civilization. Here, however, we look in vain for the regular development with which we became familiar in the ancient nations. A thousand years without the slightest progress! Nothing but mutual torture and slaughter. Not a trace of culture and civilization in the noble sense of the Greeks and Romans. A thousand years of terror, a period of human raving!

No historian could give even a fairly adequate picture of the cruelties and atrocities which filled this frightful age. Not even the most degenerate imagination could invent conditions which would equal the actual occurrences of that time. It is as though all the nobler germs of human nature had been forcibly annihilated, and the bestiality of the human being, with all its monstrosities, let loose. Even worse than this. Bestiality has something natural, and therefore reconcilable, about it. When the tiger tears his prey in pieces and greedily devours it, it is really only human prejudice that causes us to shudder. The beast does only that to which its natural instincts drive it. When the African cannibal overpowers his victim and devours it, it is again but brutal nature that manifests itself. When the wild Huns fall upon mankind like monsters, it is again nature that affrights, but also reconciles us. But here we are dealing with a so-called civilization, not with the wild outbursts of human passion, but with carefully planned, deeply considered institutions; not even sporadically appearing manifestations of single individuals, but with the whole of

Christendom during an entire millennium! Incredible! Horrible! But alas! Only too true!

It would be ridiculous for us to try to present in this narrow frame a picture of the terrors of the Middle Ages. Besides, they are too well known to require an accurate description. We wish only to remind the reader of the main features of that frightful period.

Throughout the entire Middle Ages there took place an incessant, never-ending, always recurring struggle between the supreme leader of Christendom and the government of the various nations. That nations make war upon one another is a phenomenon caused by the struggle for existence, having its origin in deeply-rooted laws of Nature. Only the greatest perfection of human civilization will perhaps be able, some day, to abolish war. We are still far from this much-to-be-desired state, and how much further from it were the people of the Middle Ages! Wars between different nations and even among themselves, were inevitable. To come out victorious from such wars, it was necessary, above all things else, that peace and harmony should reign within the state. How greatly, therefore, it must have injured the interests of the state, when a mighty organization existed within it which had altogether different interests, and which, with analagous organizations in all other states, formed one great union. How such a condition of affairs could exist permanently, is remarkable enough.

The efforts of all the popes were directed towards obtaining for themselves the supreme power. Not only the supreme power within the Church, not only the highest power over the entire clergy, but they strove for the highest spiritual and secular supremacy. To rule over all the countries of the earth, to make emperors and kings their subjects, was the goal of the popes, an ambition they very frequently came near realizing. That, with most of the popes, it was purely ambition and greed for power and wealth, is self-evident. But that this striving should have its foundation in the religious doctrine of Christianity, made this powerful position the more dangerous. "On this rock I will build my Church," Christ said to Peter. The popes

considered themselves successors of Peter, representatives of Christ on earth, and from this point of view, their position of supreme power is not only justified, but commended. Logically we must either grant the popes the highest power on earth, or as the Protestants did, later on, deny them every right of existence. As we have shown, by the example of Gregory I. the Great, the striving for unlimited power is, in popes, not only compatible with a pious, religious faith, but is the necessary result of this faith. With the same, or even greater right with which the kings of nations believe themselves appointed by the Lord, and therefore, even at the present day confer upon themselves the attribute "by the grace of God," the popes could consider themselves apostles, and look upon the crowned heads of secular states as their subjects.

Here are a few passages from the letters of Gregory VII, the pope who perhaps more than any other succeeded in increasing the power of the popes. "The Church must become free, and this through her head, through the first in Christendom, through the sun of faith, the pope. But he must free the servants of the altar from the bonds of secular power. Just as nothing spiritual is visible without the material, just as the soul is not effectual without the body, just as of these two neither can exist without means of support, so religion can not be without the Church, the latter not without the possession of an assured income. The spirit is nourished by the earthly, in the body; the Church, therefore, by land and wealth. That she receive such, that such be assured and guaranteed to her, is the duty of him who carries the supreme sword, the emperor. Therefore emperors and the secular dignitaries are necessary to the Church, which exists only through the pope, as he through God. The world is led by two lights, by the sun, the greater, and the moon, the smaller. So apostolic power is like the sun, kingly power like the moon. As the latter shines only through the former, so emperors, kings and princes exist only through the pope, since he exists through God. Consequently the power of the Apostolic See is far greater than the power of the thrones, and the king owes the pope

submission and obedience. Because the pope exists through God, everything is subject to him. Secular as well as spiritual affairs, must come before his Chair of Judgment; he shall teach, warn, punish, correct, judge and decide. The Roman Church is the mother of all churches in Christendom, and all churches are subject to her, as are daughters to their mothers. She, the mother of them all, therefore commands over all and every single member in everything. Among them are also emperors, kings, princes, archbishops, bishops, abbots."

This was the logical consequence of Christianity at that time. From this point of view, Gregory considered all crowned heads his vassals, and demanded of them that they pay a tribute to the Roman Church. If such conditions were unbearable under popes like Gregory, who at least believed in what he said, what must they have been when the Roman Chair was filled by popes who had no thought but to enrich themselves and their families, to surround themselves with a court-state of oriental magnificence, and to keep a harem to gratify their sexual desires.

For nearly fifteen hundred years the struggle between the popes and the secular powers continued, and it is not at an end yet. The fight with the sword is, as has been said, deeply rooted in the nature of mankind. There would have been wars, with and without Christianity, and there probably will be wars for some time to come. But the weapons with which the leaders of Christianity fought to obtain the supreme power for themselves are not founded on any laws of Nature. No, indeed not! They are the most horrible ever produced by the human race!

The main object of the conflicts between the popes and the secular princes, as in the first place, the emperor of Germany was constituted by the investiture, the filling of the ecclesiastic offices. If the emperor appointed the bishops, the pope still retained a tremendous power in Germany. The influence that he was able to exert on the people and on the clergy was still great enough. But if the appointment of the bishops had been left to the popes, the emperor would thereby have been deprived of all power.



More than half of the states in the German Empire belonged to the Church. After the fall of the Hohenstaufen there were 116 ecclesiastical and 100 secular states, with 60 free cities, in Germany. When the emperor opposed the presumption of the pope in claiming the right to appoint the bishops himself, the latter made use of his "weapons." The emperor was excommunicated. What a glorious manifestation of "Christian love" to say to the people: You need not obey your emperor—or rather, you must not obey him. You must curse him to whom you have sworn eternal loyalty—and why? Because the emperor endeavored to guard the best interests of his country.

According to whether or not the emperor was ready to follow the orders of the pope, he was supported or antagonized by him. The main conflict about the investiture arose between Gregory VII. and Henry IV., and, oh! what disgrace! An emperor as a penitent, barefoot in the snow, begging day and night for the pardon of the mighty pope. The counterpart of this was the method of Henry II. Though he had to overcome many difficulties at the time of his election, it was made still harder for him to maintain his throne. Under the previous emperors the nobles of the country had grown too powerful and did not wish to bend the knee to Henry. The Saxons begrudged the Bavarian the imperial crown. Thereupon Henry leaned upon the Church. He increased the authority of the bishops in every possible way, he did honor to the pope, built churches and became a most pious man. What his sword had been unable to attain, the Church accomplished with ease. The tottering throne was fortified, and the pious Emperor Henry, and his wife, Kunigunde, as well, were 250 years later placed among the saints, as shining examples for future emperors—a "saint emperor"!

In the many intrigues and conflicts which were connected with the election of an emperor, the Church was, naturally, the chief power. Therefore the crown was often bestowed on men merely because they swore obedience to the pope. Humbly, crawling on his knees, Emperor Lothar, when he received the crown from the hands of the pope,

vowed to rule the empire as a vassal of the Church. All rights concerning the appointment of bishops, as well as all other authority in the church-states, this brave emperor solemnly made over to the Holy Father.

The emperors who were manly enough to refuse to play the part of vassal to the priests were hated and excommunicated by the popes.

The line of German emperors, which more than any other strove to advance civilization, and had the good of the empire at heart, was that of the Hohenstaufen. But how were they treated by the "Holy Fathers"? They were excommunicated, persecuted and murdered by the popes, until finally their famous race was exterminated. Not one of this "hated brood of vipers" should live! Thus had the popes sworn. Of course the Hohenstaufen were not men who would crawl on their knees before popes.

Emperor Frederick II was one of the best informed men of his time. He spoke six languages, was a poet and philosopher, and had a mind far above the religious superstition of his age. He loved and advanced the arts and sciences. It was he who founded the art collections in Naples and Capua. He also wrote a book on the nature of birds, which is said to show deep understanding of the subject.

The crime of which this emperor was guilty was that he refused to submit to the arrogant demands of the popes. For this he was most cruelly persecuted and repeatedly excommunicated. "We have," thus concluded the bull of Innocent IV., "deprived of all his dignities and honors, this prince, who because of his unrighteousness, has been repudiated by God. All, who because of oath of allegiance owe obedience to him, we release from this oath, and by the perfection of our apostolic authority, command that in future no one shall obey him. Whoever disregards this command is thereby excommunicated by the Church. In Germany, those princes entitled to elect may choose an emperor; in the Sicilian kingdom, we will, with the advice of the cardinals, do what is best."

Thus a nation is commanded to rebel against its emperor. Any one not prepared to commit high treason falls

under the ban of the Church! Think of a state of affairs that enables a dishonorable, vulgar priest, by reason of "divine authority," to confiscate the offices and dignities of an emperor! This is not a matter of wickedness on the part of a single individual. No one, no matter how high his standing may have been, would have been able to accomplish this, had not the general religious belief given him the power so to do. No single person, therefore, is at fault, but the religion which makes such things possible—Christianity.

The circular which Frederick sent to the sovereigns of Europe, is so characteristic of the conditions under discussion, that we will quote a few sentences therefrom. "I am not the first," says the emperor "whom the abuses of ecclesiastical power has persecuted and attempted to thrust into an abyss. And still, in spite of this, you obey these hypocrites, whose ambition makes them hope that even the whole ocean may flow into their jaws. . . . Do not believe that the majesty of our greatness has in any way suffered by the decree of the pope. Our conscience is clear, and therefore, God is with us. We take him to witness. . . . Our priests, given up to the debaucheries of the world and steeped in sensuality, do not think of God; the superabundance of money and lands has suffocated all religion in them."

How almost monstrous was the power in the hands of the pope, how greatly all the nations were duped by the misleading doctrines of Christianity, are particularly well shown by occurrences like this. In spite of all complaints made by England and France about the rapacity and greed of the papal legates, in spite of the general discontent of the nobility with the oppression which the Church put upon them, Innocent, supported by the religious faith of the people, could safely continue in his purpose, the annihilation of the emperor. He commanded every "good Christian" to take part in the "judgment of God." Through the extortions of the papal legates in all Christian countries, enormous sums of money were at his disposal, which he used to bribe the secular princes and to equip an army

against the emperor. Mendicants were sent throughout the country to preach the cross against Frederick. All those who declared themselves ready to take part in the struggle against the emperor were promised complete absolution from their sins. By means of promises and bribes, all the princes were finally persuaded to set up a counter-emperor, Henry of Thuringen, "in honor of God and the Church as well as for the best interests of the Christian religion." Hereupon arose that frightful civil war, which devastated and depopulated the poor country. The pope was not ashamed to instigate even the emperor's son, Conrad, against his own father.

This is only one example of the endless, indescribable wars which took place during the Middle Ages between the Church and secular sovereigns. No nation could be at peace. If there were no open wars into which they were thrown by the Church, they had to submit to the even worse spoliation by the papal legates from whose rapacity the oppressed people suffered. Saint Bernhard wrote to Pope Eugene III. that his "legates had so completely ravaged and plundered all French churches from the foot of the Alps to the Pyrenees, that one might believe the Magyars had invaded the country." John of Salisbury, a famous author of the twelfth century, complains: "If a Roman legate comes into a province, it is as if Job's devil is sent forth by the Lord to devastate a country."

Again and again we must ask ourselves: How was it possible that all the nations of Europe were for a thousand years the mere foot-balls of the popes? Of course, the Apostolic See always easily found the means to carry out its will. The people themselves had to provide the money with which their lords were bribed to betray them. Today a king was given a crown which, "in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ," he had to wrest from another. Tomorrow a third appeared swallowing up the other two. And all this was accomplished by and in the name of—Christianity!

Pope Innocent III. issued an interdict against England. This meant that there could be no divine service, no church funerals, and no sacraments administered. When this

proved insufficient, King John was excommunicated, and King Philip of France was ordered by the pope to invade England with an army and to place the English crown upon his own head. When John found himself driven to extremities, he prostrated himself before the pope's ambassador and promised to pay a yearly tax of more than sixty thousand dollars, if he were granted permission to retain the English crown. This "penance" satisfied the pope and he commanded the king of France to go home again.

Does this not sound far more like the text of an operetta than the recital of actual historical events? And still, these were the actual conditions in the Middle Ages. Nothing was sacred to the Church. The clergy was an organization, spread throughout the entire world, whose only motive was the acquirement of money and power. This profane purpose sanctified every means. Lying and deceit, oppression, thievery, and murder—these were the weapons with which the Christian Church maintained its position as usurper of mankind. The following example, taken from English history, may serve as further proof for this serious accusation.

In the second half of the tenth century there were, in England, two classes of monks, the regular and the secular. It had come to violent dissensions between the two, and when the sixteen-year-old Edwy ascended the English throne, he was drawn into the struggle, as the result of which the clergy became his enemies. The young king is said to have been a finely formed youth and is accredited with having led a clean and virtuous life. Immediately after ascending the throne, he fell in love with princess Elgira, who was generally admired for her remarkable beauty and noble qualities. After the marriage of the king with his heart's desire, the quarrel between him and the clergy grew steadily more violent, so that the latter swore to be revenged on him. Elgira was a blood-relation of the king, a fact which, according to the laws of the Church, prohibited marriage between them. The priests used this as the means for their revenge and commanded the king to separate from Elgira. When he refused to obey such

an iniquitous command, the Archbishop Odo sent a troop of soldiers to the palace and had the queen dragged away by force. Thereupon he had her cheeks seared with red-hot irons, to destroy forever her beauty, and sent her into exile, to Ireland. The young king, who realized that all opposition was vain, acquiesced with heavy heart in the separation commanded by the Church. Elgira nursed her wounds, and as soon as these were healed, hurried back to England, to throw herself into the arms of her husband, for she still deemed herself his wife. But Odo had her captured even before she reached the king, and at once decided to put her out of the way altogether. But death alone did not satisfy the revengeful spirit of the blood-thirsty archbishop. The young queen was tortured and broken on the wheel, until, after several days of unspeakable agonies, she finally died.

If the cruelty of one or more individuals were here in question, this occurrence would not be worth mentioning, for people have been cruel and brutal at all times, with and without Christianity. That which arouses our indignation even more than the occurrence itself is the attitude of the people. Today, after many centuries, our hair rises on end when we think of these atrocities, but the people of those days were so blinded by the superstition of Christianity that in these horrible cruelties they saw the just punishment of Heaven for a marriage offensive to the Church. Not satisfied with this revenge, the priests instigated a rebellion, in consequence of which Edwy was deprived of his throne. His brother was only thirteen years old when he became king, and the fact of his being a minor, gave the priests free scope in their selfish actions.

The chief weapon of the hierarchy against the secular authorities was, as this example clearly shows, the blind faith of the people. To maintain this faith and to adapt the tenets of this faith at will to the prevailing requirements were the chief tasks of the clergy. Under the guise of the doctrine that a "pious faith" was the only key to eternal salvation, these "guardians of the soul" were, with remarkable unselfishness, deeply concerned about the faith and also the

spiritual welfare of every member of their congregations. With real "Christian love" the Church pardoned everything; even crimes, so long as they were not committed against the Church, and the person in question remained true to his faith. But woe betide him who turned against the Church or opposed the doctrines, ever so little! To torture such a heretic, or to kill him, was not only a pious act, but the sacred duty of the Church.

In spite of all threats and the greatest efforts on the part of that powerful organization, the clergy, there were at all times a number of sects who came in conflict with the dogmas of the Roman Church. Just where genuine religious faith was concerned, such differences of opinion were inevitable. The doctrine of the Roman Church was too full of absurdities and obvious contradictions to fail of detection by a really religious conscience. The consequence was that in spite of the great danger they thereby incurred, a few congregations openly expressed their views even at the time when the hierarchy was at the pinnacle of its power and religious opposition was supposed to be conquered.

It was particularly in southern France, where a small remainder of Roman culture, as well as a few remnants of the Arian doctrine, still existed, that it came to open opposition to papal authority. Under the name of Albigenses, a party which derived its name from the little town of Albige, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, a few sects combined in their opposition to the practices of the pope.

Innocent III. at first tried, by persuasion and conversion through his emissaries, to get control of this movement. When these measures proved ineffectual, he flung the ban of excommunication over the renegades, as a result of which the bloodiest battles took place between the papal party and the Albigenses. The pope justified his brutal conduct by saying that it was just as meritorious to war against heretics and renegades as against infidels. What a wealth of barbarism is contained in this utterance, and that, too, coming from the lips of one of the greatest popes! And still this expression is in full accord with the words

of "Christ:" "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."<sup>178</sup> The curse of Christianity is that the most atrocious crime can always be justified by some utterance of the mentally deranged Christ.

The papal party carried on the war with an actually barbarous bloodthirstiness. The atrocities committed by the wild Huns under Attila seem human compared to the fearful cruelties practiced by these defenders of Christianity. "When they stormed the city of Begiers, seven thousand persons were burned to death in the Church of Magdalen, and nearly twenty thousand massacred, without regard to age or sex. On this occasion the abbot of Citeaux is said to have answered the question how the orthodox who lived there were to be distinguished from the infidels: "Strike to kill, the Lord knows his own!" The bloodthirstiness of the papists was so great that they burned heretics at the stake, even though they declared themselves ready to renounce their faith.

When, after repeated attacks on the city of Toulouse, Count Simon with great losses was repulsed by the Albigenses, the papal legate renewed the battle by crying out to him: "Fear nothing, my lord, but make a new and more violent attack; we must, under all circumstances, take the city and destroy the inhabitants. I vouch for it that all of our people who fall in this battle will immediately go to Paradise." After these attacks, too, had proven fruitless and the count himself was killed, the king of France was forced by the pope to send his own son to take Toulouse. But when this also failed, the prince turned against the city of Miromand, which he took by storm, and had five thousand men, women and children massacred.

We must continually emphasize that single individuals are not to be blamed for these barbarous cruelties, but that the generally prevailing Christian doctrine was responsible for them. To "annihilate" heretics was the most sacred duty of good Christians. To rid the world of a heretic was

<sup>178</sup>Matt. xviii: 6.



an act no less pious than the murder of infidels. Indeed, heretics were more hated than heathen. And if one stops to think what these dreadful "heresies" were, because of which hundreds of thousands of people were killed! Here are the points about which the Waldenses, a branch of the Albigenses, came in conflict with the Roman Church.

1. That holy oil is not to be mingled in baptism.
2. That prayers used over things inanimate are superstitious.
3. Flesh may be eaten in Lent; the clergy may marry, and auricular confession is unnecessary.
4. Confirmation is not a sacrament; we are not bound to pay obedience to the pope; ministers could live upon tithes; no dignity sets one clergyman above another, for their superiority can be drawn only from real worth.
5. Images in churches are absurd; image worship is idolatry; the pope's indulgences ridiculous; and the miracles pretended to be done by the Church of Rome are false.
6. Fornication and public houses ought not to be allowed; purgatory is a fiction; and deceased persons called saints ought not to be prayed to.
7. Extreme unction is not a sacrament; and masses, indulgences, and prayers are of no service to the dead.
8. The Lord's prayer ought to be the rule of all other prayers.

It is plainly to be seen here that in opposing the Church nothing concerning the divine doctrine itself was in question. No one ever doubted the divinity of Christ. Even the Arian controversy rested merely on the question whether Christ had a double nature, divine and human, or was created from nothing. The points in dispute concerned only ceremonial matters. But that which, nevertheless, lent these an enormous importance, was the fact that the authority of the pope was thereby put in question. If one deviated a single point from the Roman doctrine, the authority of the pope was destroyed and his power broken. That mighty, world-ruling structure, the hierarchy, would thereby be doomed to fall. This is the reason why heretics were more fiercely hated than heathen. As a matter of

fact, they were more dangerous to the Papal Chair. The struggle against the pope was not represented to the people as a war against a human being or against a dignity created by man, but was a direct mutiny against the authority of God. The pope was the representative of Christ on earth. He had been installed by God, and every revolt against him was an insult to God, one of the gravest crimes of which a human being could be guilty.

In this sense the revolt against an apparently completely irrelevant ceremonial performance became a capital offense. It was altogether immaterial whether the revolt was against an important religious dogma or against a quite subordinate ceremony—disobedience to the pope was disobedience to God and was the greatest and most serious of all offenses.

The popes were well aware that their authority could be maintained only if the Roman Catholic doctrine remained uncontested and was recognized in its entirety. An emperor can compromise, but God can not. What has once been proclaimed the doctrine of God can never be taken back. It was, therefore, far better to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of persons than to deviate a finger's breadth from the existing doctrine. It is this which has made Christianity the curse of mankind. This is the reason why for centuries the fiercest battles were fought for the sake of apparently unimportant things. This is what called into being and spread throughout the world an institution, the bare mention of which, makes us shudder today; an institution which in brutality and cruelty far exceeds anything else that has ever existed in the world—the Inquisition.

Innumerable books have been written on this subject, but words are inadequate to describe even approximately the abyss of human degeneracy, the abundance of the most horrible atrocities, which the "holy" office of the Inquisition inflicted upon mankind. If today we but casually look through the history of those judgments, human nature revolts against such infamy. With disgust and horror we turn from the cold-blooded barbarism with which millions of human beings were tortured to death, torn limb from limb, and burnt alive. One feels ashamed to belong to the

human race. It does not seem possible that living beings, to whom Nature gave feelings and emotions, could be guilty of such brutalities. And alas! Not like an acute folly, aroused by human passions, did the Inquisition spread its terrors. No! For seven hundred years it raged among mankind like a terrible pestilence, morally and physically destroying everything that came within its reach. It was not a small part of humanity gone wrong, not even a single nation. No! All Christendom was possessed by this horrible barbarism. The "holy" office of the Inquisition reached throughout the whole so-called "civilized" world. It was not, as has so often occurred in history, the letting loose of human passions which the "all-ennobling Christian love" was not able to control. No! And this is the greatest conceivable irony! Christianity itself not only permitted these atrocities, but identified itself with them. The most monstrous cruelties were the natural and logical result of the Christian doctrine that made it a pious work to torture and burn the body of a heretic in order to save his soul. A further irony lies in the fact that it remained for the great conqueror of the world, this nineteenth century usurper, the great master of war, to whom bloodshed had become second nature, to definitely abolish the "holy" office of the Inquisition, and to put an end to the stake and torture applied in the name of "Christian love."

It certainly is not our intention to give a description of the Inquisition at this place. We would much prefer to turn from this painful subject and pass it by in silence. But we must emphasize certain points to do justice to the purpose of our work.

Concerning the goal and purpose of the Inquisition, it is only necessary to cast a glance at the classification of crimes which came under its jurisdiction. Of these there are six; they are:

1. Heresy.
2. Being suspected of heresy.
3. The protecting of heretics.
4. Sorcery, witchcraft, and magic.
5. Blasphemy.

6. Every opposition to the officials of the Inquisition in the exercise of their duties.

Obviously, only things which would not be considered worthy of notice today, but which for a long time were looked upon as the greatest crimes, those guilty of them being sentenced to life-long imprisonment, to the most frightful bodily and mental torture, and finally to death at the stake.

But you must realize all that was meant by "heresy." Not only those persons who publicly arose and defended views antagonistic to the religious dogmas of the Roman Church were deemed heretics, but the slightest action or remark which in any way criticised a ceremony, no matter how unimportant, was deemed heresy and was considered ample reason for dragging the guilty person to the prison of the Inquisition. For example, a man who, in speaking of a crucifix, said that it was only a piece of ivory and as such need not be worshiped as something divine, was brought before the holy office. Another, whose daughter became seriously ill, prayed to the Virgin Mary that she command her Son to save the sufferer. When, in spite of this, the daughter died anyway, the father was beside himself, and in his excitement threw away a medallion with the picture of Mother Mary on it, because she had not helped his child. The man was arrested, tortured, and sentenced to death by the Inquisition.

Any one who made the slightest remark displeasing to those about was "suspected" of heresy. Likewise every one who witnessed or listened to a heretical remark or opinion, without immediately denouncing the guilty person to the Inquisition, even though it were his own father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or sister, shared the guilt. Whoever did not punctually go to confession and to mass, whoever ate meat on those days on which it was forbidden, was accused of heresy. To associate in any way with a heretic, or to confer the least benefit or kindly act on him, even if he were in dire need, to give him food or shelter, was punishable by life imprisonment. If any one had the faintest suspicion that a person was guilty of heresy, it was

his duty to denounce him at once, or else become guilty thereof himself. It was absolutely immaterial what relationship existed between the individuals. Parents had to accuse their children, children their parents, sisters their brothers, servants their masters, before the Inquisition, if they did not wish eventually to be sentenced as heretics themselves. Children who offered assistance to a heretical father had to expiate their "crime" at the stake.

Besides the regular officials appointed in every court of the Inquisition, at whose head stood the all-powerful grand-inquisitor, there was scattered throughout the world a system of spies in the service of the Inquisition, who reported and arrested those accused or suspected. These "familiar" were not paid a salary, but considered the office bestowed on them a great honor. People from all grades of society, even counts and dukes, were proud of having this honorable office entrusted to them. A gold medal with the insignia of the holy Inquisition was the badge worn to distinguish them. As a rule, an arrest was made by a "familiar" of the same rank as the person accused. The order to follow the representative of the Inquisition must not be opposed by the faintest resistance. The suspect was not even allowed to ask the reason for his arrest. In a deathlike silence, without uttering a word, the fathers of families had to leave their dear ones. Husbands were dragged to prison from their beds at night. Not a word of consolation, no farewell from nearest and dearest. The slightest remark made by any one present was deemed an opposition against the holy court and was severely punished. As soon as a person was handed over to the Inquisition his relatives put on mourning, for the chances of seeing him again were as good as nil. What was to become of their relative, whether he suffered the agony and torture of the rack, whether he was finally to be burned at the stake—all this remained a secret to those he had been forced to leave, and to them the agonies of suspense were far greater than the most horrible certainty.

As soon as the accused appeared before the court, he was asked to make a voluntary confession, though he had

not been informed who was his accuser or of what he was accused. If he was successful in guessing these, he managed to save his life. The inquisitor was then so "mild" and "gentle" as merely to rob him of all his possessions and to sentence him to at least five years to the galleys. If he was unable to name his accusers and to confess his guilt, he was, for the time being, kept in prison. He never was told the name of his accusers. Every one could bear witness against an accused person. Personal enemies, creditors, perjurers, criminals—all were accepted as witnesses. Two witnesses who testified from hearsay counted as one direct witness. If the accused insisted in declaring his innocence, after the charge had been made known to him, though always in ignorance of the names of the witnesses or accusers, he was hurried to the torture chamber.

Who can describe the misery and agony that took place in those subterranean chambers of the prisons of the Inquisition during seven centuries? Who can think of the hundreds of thousands of innocent men and women who were therein frightfully tortured, without shuddering with horror and disgust? Machines were invented for the most refined methods of tearing human beings limb from limb, for preparing for them the slow and therefore more terrible tortures of hell. Naked women were so horribly assaulted and tortured that the mere thought of it makes us recoil with horror.

If, with the help of the rack, the Inquisition succeeded in forcing a confession, they at once—this was always the most important thing—confiscated the property of the accused, and then pronounced their sentence upon him. The punishments of the Inquisition were divided into ecclesiastical and secular. To the first belonged excommunication, the ban, pilgrimages, penances, castigations, fastings and praying. Secular punishments were, above all, imprisonment. The individual cell was a small place, having a tiny opening in the ceiling, so that the prisoner was as good as walled in, in consequence of which he was called "immuratus." His nourishment consisted of bread and water. An increase in the degree of punishment was putting the pris-

oner in chains. This was frequently carried so far that the prisoner was unable to protect himself against the vermin which usually infested the prisons. "Public exhibition" was the name of a punishment which consisted of putting on the chest and back of the criminal a red tongue, hanging down, and about his neck a placard bearing his name. In this condition he was placed on exhibition at the door of the church. "Scourging" was the name of a procedure by which the criminal was whipped through the city, strapped to a donkey. Women were often whipped, naked, through the city in this manner.

If, in spite of all tortures, after several years' imprisonment, the accused still persisted in his innocence, he was finally ordered to be burned at the stake. He was asked in which religion he wished to die. If he answered, "in the Roman Catholic religion," he was first strangled and then burned. But if he died a heretic, that is, if he remained in opposition to the orthodox church, or even belonged to another faith, he was burned alive. The simple process of burning was intensified by having the prisoner slowly singed with light straw before igniting the fagots.

The announcement of punishment as well as the sentencing to death and the burning at the stake took place with great pomp on a certain holiday, the "Auto-da-Fé." Particularly in Spain and Portugal, where the Inquisition raged the most violently, this was considered one of the most important holidays. As a rule, the ascension of a king to the throne, the coming of age of an heir to the throne, the marriage of the king, or the birth of a crown prince was celebrated in this way. Therefore, most of those sentenced to die in this way, had generally to languish for years in prison before the stake freed them from their sufferings.

In the presence of the king and queen, as well as of the entire court and an immense mass of people, these ceremonies took place, which occupied a whole day. On a large square in Madrid big stands were erected, so that the place looked like a great amphitheatre. We must refrain from describing the various ceremonies of an Auto-da-Fé. What concerns us, here, are not the ceremonies as such, but

the fact that of an atrocious event, such as the sentencing of fellow-beings to frightful punishments, such as being burned alive, a pompous spectacle was made, in which the entire population, from the king to the beggar, found enjoyment, and—this was the most horrible part of it—that this pompous spectacle had a religious significance, nay, that it was in itself a religious act, which was combined with holy masses and prayers, and which to a large extent took place in the church itself.

What, in comparison with this, are the barbaric combats with beasts of the Romans in the great amphitheatre in Rome, about the brutality of which we cannot express ourselves severely enough, today? What, in comparison, are the “living torches” of the mentally diseased Nero? What are all the persecutions of the Christians under the Roman emperors, which fill every good Christian with indignation? The theatrical combats with beasts of the Romans were simply brutal, a reminder of barbarism. Nero was a degenerate, insane individual, who filled his contemporaries with the same disgust as is felt for him by posterity, so that he was put out of the way soon after the beginning of his reign. The persecutions of the Christians by the Roman emperors were an evil, and were recognized as such by the emperors themselves. But from the viewpoint of the government, they were a necessary evil, for the Christians were communistic revolutionists.

But with what are we dealing in this matter? A spectacle famous throughout the whole world, in which kings and princes take part! The greatest festivity in honor of the Almighty God! In honor of our Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ! And in what does this festivity in the honor of the Lord consist? In horribly torturing thousands of human beings, in whipping women, strapped on donkeys, naked through the streets, in burning alive human beings like ourselves, made of flesh and blood, beings who think and feel, who love and suffer—and all this in honor of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. All this before the eyes of the noblest women of the country, the queen and the ladies of the court; all this before the eyes of the father of the



country, the good king by the grace of God; all this at the command of the Holy Father, the cardinals, the archbishops, and the bishops! Is it possible? Is it conceivable? Did all this really happen? Is it not an abominable invention, an impertinent lie? No! For seven hundred years this form of Christian love, the Inquisition, flourished. In the city of Madrid alone, according to records published in the year 1834, from 1481 to 1808, not less than 31,912 persons were burned at the stake, and 291,456 were otherwise severely punished, particularly by imprisonment, the galleys, solitary confinement in chains, etc.

In Spain the Inquisition was abolished by a decree of Napoleon on the 4th of December, 1808. Nevertheless, Ferdinand VIII. tried several times to reinstate it, so that it vanished definitely only in 1834.

In France there were frequent uprisings of the people against the Inquisition, so that it several times lost its power. But it always sprang up again with renewed and increased terrors, like the hydra, whose heads grew doubled, as soon as one was cut off. Francis I. witnessed in the year 1535 with his whole court an Auto-da-Fé. In spite of several interruptions, the Inquisition continued to flourish in France up to the revolution of the year 1848.

Napoleon put an end to the Inquisition in Italy in the year 1808. But it was reinstated by Pius VII. in the year 1814 and continued to exist until the middle of the century. So late as the year 1853 the married couple Madiari were sentenced to the galleys for becoming Protestants.

In Germany the Inquisition was abolished by the Reformation. Until then it had raged furiously there, too.

In Spain, and even more so in Portugal, where the Jews were frequently forced to adopt Christianity, there was a particular crime called "Judaism." This consisted of a continuation on the part of the baptized Jews of some of their old, inherited customs and habits, without, however, neglecting their Christian duties. For example, to eat unleavened bread at Easter; or to refrain from eating pork; or to observe the Jewish Sabbath—these were sufficiently grave crimes, especially if the accused did not confess his

crime, to cause him to be burned at the stake. As every person was at liberty to denounce his personal enemies to the Inquisition, it is quite evident that a great many people were accused without the slightest foundation. But since a mere denial did not protect a person from death at the stake, most of those accused admitted the things, of which they were accused for the purpose of at least saving their lives. When, in this way, any one had confessed to having practiced Judaism, thereby believing himself fortunate enough to get off with a sentence of five years in the galleys and the confiscation of his property, an inquisitor would step up to him and say: "If thou hast observed the law of Moses and assembled on the Sabbath day as thou sayest, and thy accusers have seen thee there, as appears to have been the case, to convince us of the sincerity of thy repentance, tell us who are thine accusers and those who have been with thee at these assemblies."

The unfortunate now went through the entire list of the "new Christians," as the baptized Jews were called, of whom he could think, in the hope of accidentally hitting upon the right names. If he was successful in this, his life was spared and he could begin to serve his sentence. But if it was impossible for him to strike the right name, he was burned at the stake at the next Auto-da-Fé. All those, whose names he had mentioned in his extremity, were now accused of Judaism, and as soon as in this manner any one was denounced by seven "witnesses," he was arrested and had in his turn to go through the same process. The entire property of the accused was always confiscated by the court of Inquisition, so that in time it amassed enormous wealth.

It is impossible to get even a fairly adequate impression of the horrors and atrocities practiced by the Inquisition, or of its power and influence on the life and character of the people. How today, in the face of such an institution, which raged for seven hundred years, one can speak of the "ennobling of mankind by Christianity," is one of those inexplicable phenomena in the history of the world.

A question, which naturally arises on observing that unfortunate age, is that concerning the character of the digni-

taries at the head of the Inquisition, and of those, who helped in carrying out its commands and attended to its business affairs. It has already been stated, that people from all ranks of society, from kings and princes down to the simple citizen, held it a great honor to dedicate their services to the Inquisition. Were all these people made up of brutality and bloodthirstiness? Was mankind so degenerate, that it was held an honor to be permitted to assist in preparing frightful agonies and atrocious tortures for one's fellowmen? This is a psychological impossibility. Such a vast difference could not possibly have distinguished the men of that age from those of all other periods of history.

Wicked and unscrupulous people have existed at all times, and that some of the officers of the Inquisition used their position to further their personal interests and to enrich themselves is beyond all question. A certain pleasure in the sufferings of their fellowmen may also have existed here and there. Undoubtedly, the many serious charges made against the Inquisition are based on these facts. Among other things, Michael de Montserrat, in his treatise, "*De caena domini*" accuses the Spanish inquisitors of having frequently thrown married women and virgins into prison, because they refused to give themselves up to the satisfying of their criminal passions. The barbarity of sentencing such women to death, on top of all this, causes the author to exclaim: "You are worse than the most vicious criminals. Are you not ashamed to seduce and rape all such wives and maidens as come into your clutches? And not content with this, to condemn them afterwards to the flames? Oh! abominable! Oh, contemptible wretches! More wicked than those dissolute villains who denounced the chaste Susanna!"

In spite of these inhuman atrocities, in spite of the obvious greed of the Inquisition to confiscate for its own use the property of the greatest possible number of people, it still seems incredible, that all these acts of violence, which were practiced in the whole Christian world for seven hundred years, should have been based solely on wickedness and joy in the sufferings of fellow-human beings. As to the

latter point, the absolute indifference, which was shown towards the most dreadful tortures, at the bare description of which we are today filled with horror, one of the strongest psychological factors must be accepted in extenuation, namely, the power of habit. Just as it is an old experience, that long wars brutalize people and accustom them to bloodshed to such a degree, that murder and massacre become second nature to them, and even the noble characters remain unmoved at the sight of human sufferings, so the habit of seeing every kind of mental and bodily torture inflicted forcibly stifled all pity and every nobler emotion.

In justice to human nature, let us emphasize it again, that it is a psychological impossibility that the whole of Christendom, throughout the world, should have been made up of psychical monstrosities who reveled in the horrible tortures of their Christian brethren. The real reason for all those horrors can therefore lie only in the religion itself. As Christ himself repeatedly says that the suffering of those persons who perished in Sodom and Gomorrah, were mild compared to the punishment to be expected by those who did not believe in him, it was daily preached to mankind, that it was an act of piety to annihilate a heretic. It was an undisputed, generally accepted opinion, that physical torture was the only means of saving the soul from the fires of hell. To denounce a heretic to the Inquisition was considered by the people its most important duty. The omission of the same was a double crime, that is, against their own salvation and against that of the heretic. How strong and deeply rooted must such religious convictions have been, if parents gave over their own children, and children their parents, to the Inquisition! What a curse to mankind is a religion that teaches such doctrines.

It was not, as may be supposed, the great mass of the ignorant rabble alone that was engrossed in such pernicious doctrines. Princes and kings believed with the same conviction that these inhuman acts were pious deeds. The German emperor, Frederick II., whom we have described above as one of the best informed and artistically minded men of his time, was one of the strongest supporters of the

Inquisition. It is said that the reproach of heresy made against himself decided him to enforce the strictest carrying out of the orders of the Inquisition, to show his own piety and fear of God.

Once, when a man sentenced to the flames, and half dead from the tortures of the rack, stretched out his hands imploringly to King Philip II. of Spain, the latter cried out indignantly: "I would rather die at the stake myself than save a miserable heretic from his fate." This king, whose history one can not read today without horror, was, after all, only a good Christian in the sense of the word of those days. Just herein lies the frightfulness of the Christian religion, that it always was the complete opposite of that which it inscribes with such pomp on its banners, namely, pity and love for one's fellow-beings, the fraternity of men and the much praised Christian love. Every religion teaches that one shall love one's neighbor, but no other religion has from the beginning to the present day, by word and deed, sinned so abominably against this very doctrine as the Christian religion. That even a king did not dare to express feelings which one attributes to every decent human being is very plainly shown by the following example:

Under the reign of Philip III., King of Spain, two Franciscan friars were accused by the inquisitors with having a design to leave their order and habit, and to turn Protestants, and as such were seized and carried to the prisons of the Inquisition, where, after having been tried, according to the usual custom, that is, without being heard in their own defense, they were condemned to be burned, as being guilty of holding heretical opinions. On the day of the Auto-da-Fé the procession passed the king, as was the usual custom. The two friars, as they were going to execution, gave glory to God for enabling them to suffer martyrdom for the confession of his gospel, and sang psalms and prayers with so loud a voice that it reached the king's ears. He, being melted to compassion at the sight of them, cried out: "Surely these two men are very unhappy to die for a thing, of the faith whereof they are persuaded." He had no sooner uttered these words than a familiar hastened and

acquainted the inquisitors with them, who immediately sent a message to the king, and declared, that the words he had spoken, having given offense to several persons, and to the holy office in particular, it was necessary he should expiate this crime by some exemplary punishment. The king did not at first take much notice of it; but the inquisitor, going up to him, told him, in a very serious tone, that he must absolutely submit himself to some punishment. At last it was agreed he should suffer a porringer of blood to be taken from him, which should be burned by the hands of the common hangman, and accordingly it was executed in the presence of the great inquisitor and his officers.<sup>180</sup>

If the slightest expression of human pity in a king was so punished, what must the common people have had to suffer, if, on witnessing the devilish tortures of their fellow-men, their friends and relatives, they uttered a word of pity!

We could prove by thousands of examples, as well as from history and the court records of the Inquisition, that being a "good Christian" was irreconcilable with the common feelings of humanity such as pity; that, on the contrary, to be a really "good Christian," according to the conceptions of that time, one must have been a monster of hard-heartedness and pitilessness.

The fate, and the facts in connection with it, of that unfortunate Spanish prince, Don Carlos, is another of those historical monuments to Christian barbarism. Few occurrences in history have been so distorted by posterity as the epoch from the death of Charles V. up to the execution of the unhappy prince.

The most diverse theories have been advanced about the last years of Charles V., as well as about the motives that induced him to retire from the government and spend the rest of his life in the seclusion of a monastery. The fact is, the emperor suffered from a severe melancholia, which showed itself toward the end of his reign, and which for nine months prevented him from signing a letter or an

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<sup>180</sup>Memoirs of the Court de Bruffy, cited in History of the Popes, Callen 171, p. 335.

order. He suffered from one of those forms of melancholia which is based on disturbances of metabolism, in his case gout, and which has more or less severe vascular changes in the brain as direct cause. His condition was, therefore, incurable and his withdrawal from the government a necessity. Among the characteristic symptoms of this disease are morbid ideas of self-accusation, frequently of a religious character, which can eventually turn into real delusions. Accordingly, the emperor suffered from the idea, that he had treated unjustly and cruelly the Protestant princes, whom he had vanquished, particularly Duke John Frederick, elector of Saxony, and Landgrave Philip of Hesse. These men now appeared as heroes and martyrs to him, and it is quite possible that, in consequence of these ideas, he felt himself drawn to their faith, Protestantism. This suspicion was heightened by the fact that he chose as his spiritual advisers three men who were themselves suspected of heresy, Doctor Caculla, whom he made his preacher, the archbishop of Toledo, and above all the bishop of Dresse, Constantius Pontius, his father confessor.

After his death, in the cell of the monastery, at St. Justus, in which he died, were found a number of articles in his hand-writing, which deal with the forgiveness of sins and mercy for earthly offenses. Although the occupation with such things is altogether characteristic of the melancholic mental condition, in which he found himself, those writings, that frequently suggested the Protestant doctrines, were interpreted as being heretical. But nothing else seems to justify this accusation so much as his will. He left very few legacies for masses, in fact, his will deviated so decidedly from what was to be expected of a pious Catholic, that the Inquisition saw therein a direct insult.

When it was seen with what zeal his son, Philip II., supported Catholicism, and sentenced to death all of those in favor of the new doctrine, the Inquisition did not hesitate to imprison the three spiritual advisers of the departed emperor, namely, the archbishop of Toledo, Caculla, the emperor's chaplain, and Constantine Pontius, his confessor ;

and shortly thereafter these three men, as well as the last will and testament of the emperor, were condemned to be burned at the stake.

This unheard-of act, this insult to the memory of the great emperor, and this sentencing to death of his three loyal servants, particularly his confessor, aroused the indignation of all Europe. King Philip, therefore, deemed it advisable not to let matters go to extremes, and stopped the execution of the three men. But in doing so, he acted with the utmost caution, so as not to offend the Inquisition, or to call its dignity or authority in question in any way.

Don Carlos, the only son of the king, acted quite differently. The young prince admired his grandfather as much as he hated his father, who cruelly abused him and capped the climax of his parental severity by himself marrying the betrothed of Don Carlos, the daughter of Henry II. of France. In his youthful sincerity and candor, the prince violently attacked the Inquisition, calling its conduct toward the memory and the trusted advisers of his grandfather the greatest infamy, and openly declaring that as soon as he came to the throne, he would completely abolish the institution.

The Inquisition could never forgive such language. Its desire for revenge was so great that it publicly demanded his death. Nevertheless, the matter was hushed up for the time being. Caculla was burned at the stake, Constantine Pontius died in prison, and burning him in effigy had to suffice. The archbishop of Toledo appealed to Rome, and, at the sacrifice of immense sums of money, and the intervention of powerful personalities, he was saved from the flames.

In spite of all these concessions, the Inquisition's thirst for revenge against the prince had in no way abated. Just as in all things else Christianity represents the exact opposite of its vaunted maxims, so it is with forgiveness. One of the fundamental laws of the Inquisition was, never to pardon. And thus only a new opportunity to get the young prince in its clutches was awaited. This was found only



too soon in the uprising of the heavily oppressed Netherlands.

Already the prince, as well as the king's brother John and his nephew, the duke of Parma, had been banished at the demand of the Inquisition; the latter, because they, too, had expressed their disapproval of the Inquisition. So, when the Netherlands were driven to direct revolt, the young liberty-loving prince saw in the fate of the oppressed people a similarity to his own, and it is not impossible that he expressed his sympathy for them. For, indeed, this sincere and upright prince had the reputation of carrying "his heart on his lips." He considered himself the most appropriate person to quell the revolution, and consequently tried his utmost to be intrusted with the mission. When this was refused him by the detested duke of Alva, he is said to have been so beside himself with rage that he drew his dagger against the duke.

The Inquisition saw in this occurrence the opportunity for revenge. Since the people of the Netherlands were heretics, the prince's sympathy for this oppressed nation was said to be a grave crime against religion, and he was accused of heresy. Forced to extremes, the prince attempted to escape, but was overtaken, arrested, and thrown into prison, where, under the most horrible tortures, he ended his life.

Opinions of historians differ as to the mode of his death. Some say that his unnatural father himself sentenced him to death. According to other accounts, he was driven to suicide. Lately it has been claimed that he was not condemned by the Inquisition, but by a commission of three members among whom were two of his bitterest enemies, the duke of Eboli and Cardinal Espinosa. It has frequently been asserted that Don Carlos was insane, though this is absolutely contrary to all facts.

What the details of the prince's death were is altogether immaterial, the monstrous fact remaining that a king dragged the memory of his father in the dust and allowed his most trusted friends to be condemned to death; that he maltreated his only son most cruelly, finally having him

imprisoned and put to death in one way or another; but that nevertheless—and herein lies the monstrous part of it—this king was set up as the model of a good Christian, and that his detestable acts were declared pious deeds. The pope supported him in his atrocities by writing to him: "The welfare of Christianity makes desirable as long a reign of Philip as possible, and a successor who will follow in his footsteps."

The inhuman atrocities committed by the duke of Alva, are too well known to need further exposition here. Besides, it is not the mere fact that this monster fairly waded in the blood of his fellowmen, that in the Netherlands he daily had people hanged, beheaded, quartered, and burned, that is of importance to us. What interests us far more than all this murdering, than all this massacring, of his fellowmen, is the circumstance that after he had had eighteen thousand "heretics" murdered during the six years in which he held office, Pope Pius V. conferred on him a sacred hat and sword as "Defender of the Roman Church."

Although in England the Inquisition was least successful, still religious massacres were the order of the day there, too. The most terrible fact is, that there even a woman was driven by Christianity to a fanatic lust for blood, thereby putting to shame the most fundamental laws of Nature. The flames of the stake raged frightfully during the gruesome reign of "Bloody Mary," which fortunately lasted but four years.

Priests and laymen were persecuted with almost inconceivable cruelty, if they adhered to the faith to which Mary's own father, Henry VIII., belonged. Gardiner and Bonner fairly waded in blood. The latter struck the prisoners with his own hands until they hung down from the exertion. With his own hands he tore the beard from the face of a man who refused to abjure his religion, and burned his hands with a candle. All the men who had stood at the head of the church under Henry VIII., such as Rogers, Hooper, Saunders, Taylor, Ridley, Latimer, etc., were burned at the stake. In Guernsey, a woman who was near the end of her pregnancy, was chained to the stake. While

writhing there in pain, her abdomen burst and in the midst of the flames she gave birth to a living child. One of the guards caught the child to save it, but a priest threw it back into the fire, with the words, "No blood of heretics shall be kept alive." More than two hundred persons were burned at the stake as heretics during Mary's short reign.

What devastation religious superstition is able to encompass, and how Christianity is in no way different from "heathen" superstition, is proved by the frightful trials for witchcraft widespread over the whole Christian world. The mere belief in witches and devils shows a deplorable mental inferiority. Nevertheless, this belief has always been an essential part of Christianity, and was therefore not only not abolished by the Reformation, but considerably strengthened.

The most conspicuous period of the witchcraft frenzy, which turned all Christian countries, such as Germany, Italy, Spain, France, and England, into one great chamber of horrors, of straining racks, of flaming stakes, began in the year 1484, with the well known bull of Pope Innocent VIII., in which, among other things, he says: "We have recently, not without great regret, learned that in certain parts of North Germany and in the provinces of Mainz, Cologne, Thuringen, Salzburg, Bremen, in cities and villages, there are many persons of both sexes, who, ignoring their own salvation, have deserted the true faith, have bodily intercourse with demoniac incubis and succubis, who, by means of magic and with the help of Satan, destroy the fruit of the wombs of women, the young animals, the products of the earth, the grapes of the vineyards, the fruit of the trees, nay, human beings, domestic and other animals, vineyards, orchards, meadows, crops, corn, wheat and other products of the earth; who torture men, women, and animals with violent internal and external pains and who are able to prevent men from begetting and women from delivering their offspring."

Hereupon the pope commanded the two inquisitors for North and South Germany to detect, punish and eradicate the witches with all the means they had at their disposal.

He ordered the bishops to give the inquisitors all possible assistance and to support them in carrying out their orders. And now, first in Germany, but gradually in all other countries, began those frightful persecutions of witches, in consequence of which thousands of persons were given to the flames. From one end of Germany to the other, nothing was to be seen but grieving, mourning families, and charred remnants of human bones.

The belief in witchcraft was brought into a regular system by the inquisitor, Jacob Sprenger, and his "*Malleus Maleficarum*," published in the year 1489, became the book of laws in all matters of witchcraft, and governed the jurisdiction concerning it. It consists of three parts. In the first, witchcraft is generally described; the second describes various kinds of witchcraft as well as their effects; the third contains the procedure in the trials of witchcraft, a veritable witchcraft code. The judge may, upon the mere information that there are witches at a certain place, begin to inquire, *ex officio*, and to hunt for witnesses, two or three of which are sufficient. Even excommunicated, infamous persons can serve as witnesses, heretics against heretics, witches against witches, the wife against her husband, children against their parents, brothers and sisters against one another—all can bear witness. Even confessed bitter enemies of the accused are admitted as witnesses. Torture was resorted to to make witches confess. Jacob Sprenger alone had forty-eight women burned alive in a short time at Constance and Ravensburg, in Schwaben, and soon thereafter, through the Papal bulls of Alexander VI., Julius II., Leo X. and Hadrian VI., the "*Malleus Maleficarum*" was recognized as the foundation of the canonical law in all other European countries. Whole regions were depopulated by murdering and burning; the specter of the fear of witch-trials lay like an oppressive Alp on the people. The clerical courts had their spies everywhere. If an old woman was unfortunate enough to have red eyes she was hopelessly lost.

The so-called "Witches' Sabbath," also called the "Witches' Supper," which plays a particular role in the

court investigations, is described about as follows: At certain times, especially during the night of the first of May, the "Walpurgis night," whereon in pagan times a spring-festival had been celebrated, Satan held high carnival. The witches left their homes, riding on broom-sticks, forks, canes, goats, and dogs, and hurried in rapid flight to the place where Satan, in the form of a goat or a human being, sat on his throne and solemnly received and initiated the new witches. Then, after the witches had danced a ring-around-a-rosy about him, they approached him, one by one, and kissed his posterior. Then a meal consisting of sausages, ham, etc., which had been brought along by the wealthier witches, was eaten, and finally the whole thing ended in every witch amusing herself in silence with her special devil-lover.

Closely connected with this was the so-called anthrophagy, according to which Satan, as well as those who worshiped him, were supposed to live on the flesh of human beings. The worshipers of the devil were supposed to eat their own children. Thousands of people were burned alive for being suspected of this. Those accused of witchcraft were burned at the stake, if they confessed. If not, they were tortured on the rack until they admitted being witches. But a confession was not always necessary to give the accused person over to the flames. If they had any kind of birth-mark on their bodies it was a sign with which Satan had marked them and sufficed to condemn them as witches. Since, according to the "*Malleus Maleficarum*," the fire test was useless, because fire was an element favorable to the devil, the water test was resorted to, the "witches' bath," which took place in the following manner: The accused was stripped of her clothes, bound crosswise in such a way that her right hand touched the big toe of the left foot, and the left hand the big toe of the right foot, and, with a long rope tied around her body, was laid on the water. If she sank, she was innocent, but if she floated on the water, she was guilty.

Like most of the other phenomena of religious superstition, these famous witch-trials find their scientific explana-

tion in mental diseases. The characteristic symptom of one of the most frequent forms of insanity, melancholia, is the so-called delusion of self-accusation. The sufferers concerned, who are in a state of deep depression, try unconsciously to explain their melancholic moods by accusing themselves of some imaginary crime. In the milder forms they simply say: I am wicked, I have neglected my duties; I deserve to be punished. In the more severe form, these self-accusations assume the character of an actual delusion. Then it is no longer a question of a mere feeling of wickedness, but the sufferer firmly believes that he has committed an actual crime, which he describes in full detail, although there is not the slightest foundation therefor. The content of such a delusion depends on the environment of the person concerned. Today, melancholic women generally accuse themselves of having been untrue to their husband. Business men claim that they have forged, or embezzled money, although there is not the slightest cause for all these ideas. Religiously inclined persons, in a state of melancholia, frequently accuse themselves, even today, of religious crimes. Why, even in this age, we not seldom come across women in insane asylums who maintain that they are witches and are in communication with the devil.

During the Middle Ages, when, thanks to Christianity, which formed an obstacle to all mental progress, the existence of insanity was not even remotely suspected; when the whole population was wrapped in darkest superstition, delusions of self-accusation naturally assumed a religious character, and thousands of innocent women accused themselves of being witches. A midwife, who was burned at the stake at Dann, near Basel, accused herself of having killed more than forty children. She even admitted that she dug up their corpses in the night, and ate them, after having roasted their flesh in an oven. She was unquestionably insane, suffering from melancholic delusions of self-accusation.

Another woman, who was executed in Berne, confessed: "We watch particularly for children not yet baptized, but

for those baptized too, particularly if they are not protected by the sign of the cross, and kill them when they lie in their cradles or beside their parents by our words and ceremonies, so that it is thought that they were suffocated or died a natural death."

Thousands of unfortunate women in this way became the victims of the rack and the stake. In the electorate of Trier alone, six thousand five hundred persons are said to have been executed in a very short time, as bewitched and bedeviled.

More dreadful in many respects than even melancholia was the effect of paranoia, in bringing victims to the stake. For here it was not the individual alone to whom the delusion applied and who in consequence paid herself the penalty of being a witch, but perfectly strange persons could without warning become the victims of the insanity of a person utterly unknown to them. In those individuals suffering from paranoïcal delusions of persecution, the content of their delusions is likewise dependent on their environment. Today paranoïacs believe themselves persecuted by their enemies, by electricity, lately even by wireless telegraphy, or by hypnotism, telepathy, or something akin to these. At that time, devils and witches pursued them to make them the sport of their infamous actions. Thousands of absolutely innocent persons were therefore accused by such pananoïacs of having communication with the devil, and since only two witnesses were necessary to convict a person of being a witch or a devil, one can easily get an idea of how dreadful conditions must have been. No person could insure himself against being suddenly accused of witchcraft, and then being burned at the stake in Christian love.

Thousands of books could be filled with the most frightful examples of human fiendishness and brutality; millions of innocent men and women were atrociously tortured to death and burned alive during these awful Middle Ages. And all "in honor of our Lord, Jesus Christ," all these brutalities in the name of a religion of which it is claimed

today that it has uplifted mankind, and that to it we owe our present civilization.

If this was the much praised Christian love which Christian brethren showed one another, what must have been the attitude towards those who did not belong to Christendom? All people who did not believe in the divinity of that insane Jew were not even looked upon as human beings. The "heathen" in Europe had been exterminated by the sword. To kill Jews, singly or in bodies, was considered a noble, pious work. The overpowering of those "infidels," the Mohammedans, was looked upon as the greatest and noblest heroism.

As to the last point, we must here mention a phenomenon which spread over several centuries, and which, as the great English historian, Hume, righteously said, "formed the most signal and most durable monument of human folly, that has yet appeared in any age or nation"—the Crusades.

Indeed, a monument of human folly! Can a greater imbecility be imagined than fitting out one crusade after the other to capture the tomb of a Jewish carpenter who died a thousand years ago? And, at that, an empty tomb, for is the "Savior" not supposed to have arisen and gone to heaven? The enthusiasm of all the people throughout Europe, for which men left wife and children, and were ready to sacrifice their lives to conquer the "holy place" where the Savior once dwelt, has about it something pathetic. How deeply and firmly religious superstition must have been rooted in all mankind, from princes and kings down to the beggar! Everybody saw signs in the sky, which it was believed indisputably indicated God's will. A fiery way, so it was said, stretched through the dark blue towards morning. One priest claimed to have seen a sword in the sky, another a whole army, a third two fiery knights fighting and the victor decorated with a cross; it was even said that Charles the Great had arisen from the dead and would lead the holy combatants himself. From all countries of Europe, from all the ranks of the population, hordes swarmed to the flag of the holy army. "God wills it!" This was the cry from one end of Europe to the other.



The total number of crusaders is estimated at seven millions. All those who took part in the crusades were promised complete absolution of their sins. No one who traveled to the Holy Land was to be forced to pay his debts.

Thus one army after another traveled to a strange country, to make war on a strange people, and, if possible, exterminate it, though it had wronged no one. But they were "infidels," they did not believe in the "Son of God," in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it was therefore a pious act to butcher them like a lot of mad dogs. An order of knights was even formed whose "kighthood" consisted in murdering as many "infidels" as possible. Eight crusades were undertaken for the conquest of the Holy Land. How many millions perished in them, how many women and children were murdered, who can say today? When, after unspeakable human sacrifices, the crusaders finally succeeded in conquering Jerusalem, they, in genuine Christian love, massacred all the inhabitants of the city, Mohammedans and Jews, sparing neither women nor children, and then, on the corpses of innocent human beings, they planted their banners and sang their Christian songs of praise. When, soon thereafter, the "infidel" Saladin recaptured Jerusalem, he disdained to take revenge for the atrocities of the Christians, allowing the prisoners to go free and leave the country, unmolested. Just think, how much superior was the degree of civilization attained by this "infidel" prince to that of which boasted all those "pious" and "faithful" Christians!

"A most durable monument of human folly!" Indeed! Words are inadequate to describe this folly and to give a picture of the abyss of meanness into which Christianity had plunged the human race. But more disgusting than these things themselves, is the despicable, pitiable way in which certain modern historians not only excuse this "folly," but strive to glorify it. "Genuine, intense love for the Redeemer," it is said, "kindled in their hearts the desire to tread the sacred spot over which his feet once passed, and to shed burning tears in most profound worship on the sacred hill on which he had shed his blood for mankind."

Many historians extol the crusaders as a blessing to Europe, because through them the European nations received the foundation of their later culture, that is, education, art, and science. "The greater refinement and higher education," they say, "which the knights brought back from the Orient, produced in the life of all the nobility, of all the people, of Western Europe, a poetry of intense feeling and strong emotion, such as the world had not known before." Another author says: "To these wild expeditions, the effect of superstition or folly, we owe the first gleam of light which tended to dispel barbarism and ignorance."

That the knights on their return from the Orient brought with them culture and civilization, is perfectly true. But what does this prove? Only that the "infidels" had attained a far higher degree of culture than the Christians, held in the miserable bonds of superstition, that, therefore, Christianity acted in any way but for the ennobling of mankind; that, on the contrary, the non-Christians were in every respect more "noble." In these points, therefore, we fully agree. But that one thereby justifies the crusades, and excuses them, is too revolting. It is about the same as though one wished to justify a band of burglars who had robbed a number of fine houses and brutally killed the persons they found there, by stating that by means of the books and works of art they had stolen they had improved their education. What a pitiable morality is that which our children acquire in school by such subterfuges!

As a fact, it took very little to advance the education and culture of the Christian nations; for they were on the very lowest conceivable rung of mental development. Religious superstition and the iron severity of Christianity had made the development of mental powers an impossibility. So great was the prevailing superstition that nearly the whole Christian world believed that in the year one thousand, Christ would return and thereby bring to an end the earthly world. Not only the lower classes held this belief, but all the nobility, the priests, the reigning princes, were prepared for the end of the world. A mass of legal documents

began with the words, "Since the world is approaching its end . . ." In most regions the farmers did not cultivate the land in the year one thousand, so firmly were the people convinced of the approaching destruction of the world. The result was a general famine.

The people were intentionally kept in the utmost ignorance. Reading and writing were rare accomplishments, even in the higher grades of society. The nobility looked down with disdain on education. Physical strength, agility in battle, skill in the handling of weapons—these were the qualities which hovered before them as the greatest achievements in life. Science in our modern sense of the word did not exist at all. What they called science referred to religious matters exclusively. A person well versed in the Bible, who knew all the canonical laws, who was acquainted with the innumerable saints, was considered a learned man. Reading the Bible was forbidden to the laity, and too close application to it by the clergy was also looked upon with disfavor. There were no natural sciences. And how should this be possible? As soon as a person expressed an opinion that in any way contradicted Biblical views, he was tortured and eventually burned at the stake. Everything centered in the Church. Everything was under the powerful dominion of Christianity. The thousands of sacred paintings with which our art galleries are filled, the endless madonnas, the innumerable crucifixions, and the perpetually recurring Biblical scenes, give evidence of the slavery in which the arts were kept. Even the greatest geniuses dedicated their art to this object, as though there were nothing else in the world. The noble arts and sciences of the Greeks and Romans seemed buried for all time.

The moral views of those times might be expressed in the words: Every one who conscientiously observed the ceremonies of the Catholic Church and obeyed all the orders of the priests, was a good and pious Christian, whose soul would some day receive its reward in heaven. Any one who, on the contrary, by the slightest remark, aroused the suspicion that he disapproved of anything connected with the Church, was a miserable heretic, doomed to hell and its

eternal fires. Offenses and crimes that had no bearing on the Church or the clergy were of small importance, and pardon for them could easily be bought with money. "Absolution" from sins was a source of enormous income for the Church, and there were no sins for which absolution could not be bought. Murder, robbery, felonious assault, were far lesser crimes than refraining from eating pork, or making occasional remarks about "the blood shed by the Inquisition." The latter crimes had to be expiated on the rack and at the stake, while murder and deadly assault had their price in money, according to the station of the murdered person. If the booty of the innocent victim of the murderer was divided with the Church, the murder even became a pious act, for which the perpetrator was promised a particularly good seat in heaven. Incredible as this may sound, it is nevertheless the naked truth. What else were the much admired knights of the Middle Ages but robbers and murderers? How many thousands of innocent persons had to bleed to death on the highway so that their possessions could decorate the fortified castles of the brave knights! If such a knight gave a part of the stolen property as a legacy to the Church, he was considered a pious man and a good Christian, who would some day receive his reward in the Kingdom of the Lord.

These were the conditions that existed in all Christian countries during those thousand years which are called the "Dark Middle Ages." Such were the people whom a thousand years of Christianity had "ennobled." Fathomless ignorance, dark superstition, bestial cruelty, blind fanaticism, hypocrisy and sanctimoniousness, these are the qualities which Christianity has bestowed upon the human race.

#### 4. THE FORERUNNERS OF THE "REFORMATION."

If one views Christendom as it spread over the whole of Europe, until the beginning of the sixteenth century, as a unity, independent of the political and racial differences of the people belonging to it, there will be seen the same process of development that all civilized nations had to go

through, and which we have repeatedly pointed out in the foregoing chapters.

Like all other peoples, the Christians began their political course with a primitive communism, with the doctrine of equality and fraternity, which with them, however, did not remain an empty, theoretical ideal, but was actually carried out in practical life by the giving up of all personal property. With the growth of Christian congregations and the spread of their doctrine, the communistic principle began to disappear, yielding again, as was the case with all other peoples, to personal property, and the struggle for position and wealth resulting therefrom. The principle of equality and fraternity was gradually changed into its direct opposite. The distinctions between rich and poor grew ever greater. Class distinctions grew steadily more pronounced. Poverty among the proletariat became more and more widespread, while the immense accumulation of capital in the hands of single individuals continually increased. It is the old story, over and over again. Christianity did not even permit equality and fraternity to exist after death. For in the Kingdom of God, too, there were "Sancti," "Beati" and all possible privileges. The priests promised "good seats" in the Kingdom of God, as if they were dealing with orchestra chairs in a theater.

The last centuries of Christianity preceding the Reformation present a phenomenon absolutely analogous to that of the last centuries of the Roman Empire, with the only difference that the manifestations of mental decadence and degeneracy, as they appeared in the leaders and dignitaries of Christianity, surpassed a hundredfold the analogous phenomena among the Romans, and that thereby the one thing that was sacred to mankind, and around which all their thoughts seemed to center, namely religion, was shamelessly prostituted. The popes, the "representatives of Christ on earth," had long ago ceased to observe even the outer forms of propriety. They were not ashamed to display the most vulgar indecencies and to turn the Vatican into a veritable brothel.

"Paul II. began his reign by breaking the oath, taken

before his election in the presence of all the cardinals. It seemed as if those popes made perjury a papal prerogative. If before their election they promised to abolish such and such abuses and took certain obligations upon themselves, they immediately afterwards maintained that all promises, oaths, and agreements which hampered the power which Christ had given his representatives, were null and void."

The next pope, Sixtus IV., is described by his contemporary, Stephen Infessura, chancellor of the city of Rome, as so shamelessly greedy for money that he never gave a benefice without being paid for it, "and even occasionally sold it to the highest bidder, frequently selling even cardinalships and bishoprics, besides carrying on corn usury." He also accuses him of sexual perversities.

"Under his successor Innocent VIII., Rome was filled with whores, criminals and murderers, and whoever could pay for a crime, remained unpunished."

Pope Alexander VI., who began his reign in the year 1492, is described by historians as a perfect monster. John Burchard, his master of ceremonies, tells things of him, in his secret history, which cannot decently be repeated. His contemporaries put him side by side with Caligula, Nero, and other monsters among the emperors of ancient Rome. His shamelessness went so far that he quite openly admitted being the father of five children, and, at the marriage of his daughter Lucretia, had public plays produced in the Vatican. He died by poison, which, in a plot with his son, he had intended for the cardinals he had invited to be his guests at dinner, in order to possess himself of their treasures, after their death. By a mistake, the servant changed the cups, the plot thus rebounding on its originator.

Pope Julius II. excelled so much by his perfidy and baseness, his insolence and the mania to wage war and to appear at the head of an army, that Louis XII. of France vowed to bring about his downfall, and had a coin stamped with the inscription: "I shall destroy Babylon." At an ecclesiastical meeting convoked by the cardinals at Milan, he was deposed in contumacia, the following reasons being

given for the action: "The pope is an enemy to peace, creating nothing but dissension and bloodshed among the Christian monarchs, spreading among the people of God the seeds of dissatisfaction and strife, and proves himself absolutely incorrigible, callous, and impenitent in all his horrible, incessant, and evident vices and crimes." In spite of this public declaration of the synod, this "Holy Father" succeeded with the help of the Emperor Maximilian I, in retaining the Apostolic See up to his death.

His successor, Leo X., though a man of mild disposition and a friend of the fine arts, knew no limits in his craving for splendor and luxury. To refill the empty papal coffers and to be able to satisfy his sensual desires undisturbed, he made use of every means that might help to this end. He sold bishoprics and cardinalships as though they were old clothes. He once appointed 31 cardinals in one day, among them a boy of eight years.

That with such an example as was given by the highest dignitaries of the Church, the subordinate clergy gradually followed more and more in the former's footsteps until they utterly disregarded propriety and decency, can easily be imagined. Shameless debauchery and ostentation, the most pitiless extortion of their subjects, robbery, and plundering of the sacred legacies of their predecessors—these were the traits manifested by the bishops and cardinals, to the imitation of which their example incited also the priests of lower grades.

Not less depraved and degenerate than the secular priests were the members of the various religious orders, who were totally devoid of all decency. The brutality and wickedness of the Dominicans and Franciscans, who were a perfect plague to the country, is beyond description. Besides their unlimited excesses and sensual lust, they also showed such consummate ignorance, as you today would hardly think possible. In their eyes men who had a taste for science and sought enlightenment, like Reuchlin, Erasmus, *et al*, were accursed heretics, who deserved to be persecuted by fire and sword. A monk is said once to have uttered the following idiocy in the pulpit: "A new language

has also been invented, which is called Greek, but of which you should beware, for all sorts of heresies originate from it. I see a book written in this language in the hands of many persons, which is called the New Testament, and is full of thorns and vipers; and as to the Hebrew language, all who learn it at once become Jews."

If the clergy displayed such horrible ignorance, how great must have been the stupidity and superstition of the people! It was of the utmost importance to the clergy to keep the people as ignorant as possible, for in the stupidity and superstition of the people lay the enormous power of the Christian Church.

Not only morally, but politically also, the conditions of those days can be likened to the last period of the Roman Empire. Like the Roman emperor, so the Christian pope held his luxurious court in Rome. Both represented the supreme power of a mighty widespread empire, which had subjugated kings and princes, all of whose states had to pay tribute to the almighty chief in Rome, with only this difference, that the emperor compelled the tribute by the strength of his legions, while the weapon of the pope was Christianity. And what a weapon this was! Far stronger than all the victorious legions of the Roman Caesars, the superstition of the people, based on stupidity and ignorance, was utilized by the holy priests to induce citizens and soldiers to commit high treason against the prince of their country, to whom they had sworn obedience. Any one who refused to commit this act of treason was excommunicated and threatened with eternal damnation in hell. Just as the politics of the Roman Empire were directed towards the subjugation of nations, the acquisition of slaves and the procuring of the greatest possible tribute, so all the efforts of the clergy, spread over the whole world, were bent on acquiring property, on draining the nations of their possessions, and on increasing the treasuries of the Church immeasurably. Everything was a matter of "dollars and cents." Christianity was nothing but an enormous business at the head of which stood the "Holy Father," whose department chiefs were the bishops and cardinals, whose offi-



cers and bookkeepers were the lower clergy, and whose traveling salesmen were missionaries who sold indulgences. Any one who tried in any way to avoid buying the wares offered him, or to pass the faintest criticism on these Christian wares, was immediately imprisoned, tortured, and kept in lifelong bondage, or burned at the stake. A fine business, indeed!

That the world gradually grew indignant towards this Christianity; that every possible means was tried to escape from the frightful oppression that Christianity practiced on mankind, can assuredly astonish no one. It is far more remarkable that mankind for so long a time allowed itself to be enslaved and abused to such an extent. The reason for this lies in the fact that those who had it in their power to shake off the Christian yoke, that is, the secular rulers, made use of the same weapon, Christian superstition, on their part, to drain the people of their possessions. The noble princes sought to be on good terms with the Church, so as to be able to rob the people together. Of the sorrow and misery that the masses had to suffer from "Christian love" in the course of those long centuries, mere words can give no adequate idea. No historian could describe the abyss of despair into which mankind was driven by Christianity. Only in cases where the interests of the great rulers came into collision with those of the head of the Church and caused an irreparable opposition, did battles arise between the ecclesiastical and secular powers, and in these the former were usually victorious. In the penitent's shirt Emperor Henry IV. of Germany had to implore the mercy of the pope. The noble race of the Hohenstaufen was completely exterminated by the popes. In their struggle with the secular power of the French people they were less successful. Here Philip IV. was victorious in the war with the Church. Pope Boniface VIII., like Gregory VII. and Innocent III., wanted to unite the supreme secular and ecclesiastical power in his own hands. More forcibly than any of the foregoing popes, he proclaimed the omnipotence of the Church. But his ambitious plans were wrecked by the firm opposition of Philip IV.,

so that the king of France succeeded in most deeply humiliating the Apostolic See. The popes were kept by him like prisoners at Avignon and were brought completely under French influence.

The reason why the popes were more successful in the exercise of their power over the German emperors, than over the rulers of other countries, lies in the constitutions of the countries in question. Emperor Maximilian I. uttered the well-known remark: "The king of France reigns over donkeys, who cheerfully carry the burden he has put upon them; the king of Spain over men who listened only to sensible reasons; the king of England over angels, so loyal are their services, but the German emperor rules over princes who obey him only when it suits them to do so." This, as a fact, was the state of affairs. Germany consisted of any number of imperial states, each one of which was a sovereign power. The German emperor was only a confederate, to whom the presidency had been given, but whose power was dependent on the good will of the princes.

The end of the crusades, which were really nothing but great predatory expeditions, had the effect that the knights, who could make their living only through robbery, turned against the citizens and farmers of their own countries, and to robbery and massacre among themselves. The popes knew how to make use of these conditions, for they understood how to find confederates against the emperor in his own country, if he dared to oppose them.

But conditions were different in England. Here, among the knights, who also lived on what they stole, there was sufficient agreement to combine themselves against the French in that war that lasted more than a hundred years. This war, which was nothing but an endless chain of predatory excursions, presented to England a source of seemingly inexhaustible wealth. It is said that after the battle of Crecy the conquered north provinces of France were so plundered "that the wealth acquired thereby by the English entirely changed their life and customs." Another source of income for the English was the steadily flourishing wool

industry of the Netherlanders, who got their raw material from England and therefore brought enormous sums of money into this country, a heavy duty having been put on the exportation of wool. In the year 1354 the value of the wool exported out of England amounted to 196,062 pounds.

As the English lived on plundering and robbing the French, so the latter fell upon the Netherlanders, while the Scotch made their predatory attacks on England, being supported therein by the French.

After all, the peasants were the ones who had to suffer from all these wars. They always had to foot the bill while the Church and the nobility shared the profits.

Wherever in history the people suffered from oppression, where, through need and misery, they have been driven to attempt the improvement of their condition and the delivering of themselves from the yoke of the oppressor, we find that instinctive impulse to closely unite. This impulse, which is found even among animals, produces in wild and uncivilized nations that primitive communism, which confines itself to common fishing and hunting, and to common fighting against external foes. But if we are dealing with a nation of higher development, the communistic tendencies assume a more scientific character. Laws and rules for production and consumption are formed, and eventually the entire mode of life of the single individuals is regulated. Communistic congregations may, like the Essenes of the Jews, be entirely exclusive, without coming in conflict with the government or the rest of the citizens, or they may assume an aggressive position though deeming the communistic principle set up by them the only correct one, and, like the first Christians, attempting to introduce it generally. The means for accomplishing this may be altogether peaceful, such as oratorical agitations, or they may consist of violent uprisings against the prevailing order of things.

Naturally, in such cases, the class that played the role of the oppressor and derived its benefits from the privations and misery of the oppressed, was always antagonistic to such communistic tendencies. It was the doctrine of com-

munism which led to the frightful persecutions of the Christians under the emperors. Communistic tendencies, no matter under what name, under what cloak they arose, have always acted on the propertied class like a red rag on a bull. The communists were persecuted and burned at the stake, and this fear of communism has persisted up to the present day. And in spite of all this—is it not the very irony of fate?—it is this same communism on which originally Christianity was built. Without communism the development and propagation of Christianity would have been an impossibility. The old fathers of the Church, who were the pillars of original Christianity, who tried to spread the Gospel of Christ throughout the world, represented the same principles, made use of the same arguments, as did those men who, in later centuries, were persecuted and tortured as communistic heretics by the Christian dignitaries.

Just compare the utterances of the "Fathers," for which they were highly praised and declared "saints" by the Christian rulers, with those of later leaders of sects, for which these were imprisoned, tortured and burned alive. "Ye miserable ones," says, for example, "saintly" Basilus, "how will you justify yourselves before the eternal judge? Ye answer me: In what am I wrong, since I keep only what belongs to me? But I ask you, what do you call your own? From whom have you received it? You act like a man in a theater who hurries to secure all the seats and tries to prevent others from entering, by keeping for his own use what is intended for all. How did the wealthy grow rich, except by taking for themselves things that belong to all? If every one took no more for himself than was necessary for his support and left the rest for others, there would be neither rich nor poor."

Pope Gregory "the Great" wrote in a similar way: "It is not enough that one does not take the property of others; one is not innocent as long as one retains for one's self what God has created for all. Whoever does not give to others what he has is a murderer and homicide, for since he keeps for himself what should have gone to support the poor, one may say that he daily kills as many as could have

lived on his surplus. If we share with those in need, we do not give them anything which belongs to us, but what belongs to them. It is not a work of mercy but the payment of a debt."

Compare these doctrines of the "saintly" men of early Christianity with the utterances of those reformers who tried to deliver the oppressed people from the later Christian Church. Thus John Ball, in England, says in one of his sermons: "Dear friends, matters will not improve in England until everything becomes common property and there are neither bondsmen nor nobles; until we are all equals, and lords are no better than we are. How have they treated us? Why do they keep us in bondage? We are all descendants from the same parents, from Adam and Eve. How can the lords prove that they are better than we are? Perhaps in that we produce and work for what they consume? They wear velvet, silk, and furs; we are clothed in miserable linen. They have wine, spices, and cake, we have bran and drink only water. Their portion is idleness in gorgeous castles, ours is care and work, rain and wind in the field, and yet it is our work from which they get their luxury."

John Ball, a Franciscan monk, was a leader of the "Lollards," who in the fourteenth century traveled through the country trying, by the foundation of communistic congregations, to assuage the frightful misery which the drain of the Church on the people had generally produced. The Archbishop of Canterbury, as well as the Bishop of Norwich, excommunicated him, and Edward III. had him thrown into prison.

This is only one example out of thousands. Whoever said and taught the same as did the old "saintly" Apostolic Fathers, was excommunicated, tortured, and given over to the flames. For now it was the Christian Church which represented the class of the great landowners, and who did not wish to be disturbed in the enjoyment of their riches by the miserable proletariat. A thousand times worse than the Roman emperors had persecuted the Christian communists, did the great leaders of Christendom butcher their

Christian brethren solely because they preached anew original Christianity, the doctrine of the old "saintly" fathers of the Church. Exactly the same as the insane Nero and Caligula had done, the heads of Christianity did, only a thousandfold worse, in the name and for the honor of "our Lord, Jesus Christ."

All the revolts against the Christian yoke, the so-called "forerunners of the Reformation," were communistic agitations. They assumed a religious significance only inasmuch as all institutions of life were governed by Christianity, no social or political affairs being able to exist independently of religion. One agitation after the other was suppressed by the Christian authorities and the leaders of them gruesomely tortured to death.

In the thirteenth century there originated among the lower classes of Italy the agitation of the "Apostolic Brethren." This was a confederation founded by Gerardo Segarelli, and corresponding in every respect to the brotherhoods of the early Christians. "They called each other brother and sister, after the fashion of the primitive Christians. They lived in severe poverty and were not allowed their own houses, nor care for the morrow, nor anything that belonged to comfort or convenience. When hungry they asked the first one they met for food, without desiring any particular kind of food, and ate whatever was given them. The wealthier ones who joined them had to give up their fortunes for the common use of the brotherhood." This description is exactly like those we have of the early Christian congregations. They also held secret meetings at night, in which they taught the "new message of salvation." They sent their apostles to all countries, to Spain, France, and Germany. Here they grew so numerous that in 1277 a clerical meeting at Wuerzburg had especial laws passed concerning them. In Italy Pope Honorius IV. tried to exterminate the brotherhood. Segarelli was arrested and burned at the stake in the year 1300. But by this the brotherhood was not put out of existence. The brave and bold Dolcino stepped into his place. He married Margherita of Trenk, who was famous for her beauty,

magnanimity and generosity, and together they worked for the holy cause. For seven years they breathed defiance at the head of the heroic "brethren." The Bishops Vercelli and Novara, who conducted a strong army against them, sustained a complete defeat. Dolcino tried his best to increase his army, consisting mainly of peasants. The adherents of the new doctrine flocked to his banner with the greatest enthusiasm; not only men, but also women, who under Margherita's guidance fought like lionesses. The sisters were neither less fit nor less able to perform these deeds of heroism than the men. They put on men's clothes, were enrolled with the soldiers and fought as valiantly and desperately as the men. In spite of their enormous superior force, the bishops did not venture to attack this heroic band again in open battle, and therefore decided to surround and starve them. In his "Divine Comedy," Dante describes the victory of the "army of the cross" over the small, enclosed company, who yielded only to cold and hunger. So great grew their need that they lived on the flesh of those who had succumbed to pestilence and privation. At last the Apostles became so emaciated that they resembled half decayed corpses more than human beings. Nevertheless, the fear of the besiegers was so great that they decided on an attack only after deserters betrayed to them that the besieged had grown so weak that they were unable to use their weapons. At last came the attack on the besieged, who had grown so weak that they could not even stand erect, and every single one of them, men and women, were most brutally butchered. Only Dolcino and Margherita were "spared," by the express command of the bishop, because he first wished to revel in the tortures of their long-drawn-out death. Torture was resorted to, to force both to recant their faith. But firmly Dolcino and Margherita defied the agonies which the cruel judges pronounced on them; not a murmur of pain escaped the lips of the faithful wife, not a word of complaint or discontent was uttered by her brave-hearted fellow-sufferer. Not the cutting off of separate parts of their bodies, or the breaking of them on the wheel; not crushing, nor piercing

of their flesh with torture spikes and pinions, could force from their compressed lips a word of recantation or a cry for mercy.

Thus both were sentenced to the flames as heretics. Margherita was forced to witness the execution of Dolcino. Even in this frightful moment this heroic woman remained firm. Once more, but again in vain, both were admonished to recant, whereupon, to increase the torture of the souls of both the unfortunates, the slaves caught hold of Margherita, and on a stand opposite the smoldering stake of Dolcino, and during his death agony, practiced on her every form of abuse and torture. Margherita was afterwards burned at the stake.

Gruesome and revolting as this occurrence seems, it is far from being unique in history. Oh, no! On the contrary. All those who opposed the disgraceful oppression and the robbery and greed of the Christian Church were treated in the same way. In all countries, in Italy, Germany, France, England, and Spain, performances like this took place continually. And now compare these conditions with the persecutions of the Christians under the Roman emperors, and ask which of the two was worse! Where is the "ennoblement" of mankind, after the existence for more than a thousand years of Christianity? Is it not the most impudent lie to continue to proclaim that Christianity has ennobled the human race?

All the religious sects which in the course of centuries were formed in opposition to the Church, were, as a matter of fact, nothing but protestations of distress and misery against rapacity and oppression on the part of popedom. Religious tendencies acted like sparks ready to ignite a communistic agitation. The many peasant wars, as well as the violent uprisings of the different sects of the Middle Ages, must be regarded in this sense. They all came to nothing. After more or less obstinate opposition, they were all conquered. The reason for their importance lay in the fact that not only the Church, but the nobility as well, were against them. They had an equal interest in suppressing the people, and against two such foes the help-



less peasants of those days could accomplish nothing of a permanent nature. Of the three factors which were opposed to one another at that time, the Church, the independent nobility, and the peasants, the first was by far the strongest, and a defeat of the Church could be imagined only if the other two parties combined against her. The very diversity of their interests put this out of question during all those centuries. But, finally, the greed and the systematic spoliation practiced by the Christian Church grew to such dimensions that, for the present, all other interests were set aside, and the only thing to be considered was the deliverance from papal oppression.

Besides the German Empire, England was the country upon which the popes, like hungry wolves, threw themselves. There was even a time when England was the main treasure chamber of the Holy Fathers. King John, one of the greatest scoundrels who ever occupied the English throne, with his own hand had murdered the young Prince Arthur, the son of his brother and rightful heir to the throne. King Philip of France publicly accused him of the murder, and declared all his possessions in France confiscated. Since John had also insulted the clergy, Pope Innocent III. laid the ban on the king and the interdict on England. John found himself in a difficult position and the crown of England seemed lost to him. But money was able to accomplish anything with the popes, and how much easier is this for a king who, instead of drawing on his own resources, can use those of his subjects! John declared himself willing to pay a yearly tax of \$60,000 to the pope, and with this all his shameful acts, including the murder of the prince, were buried.

From this time forth the pillage of the people of England increased steadily. Even at the time of Edward III. Parliament complained that they had to pay the pope annual tributes that were five times as large as that paid to the king. But when, later on, the popes had to take up their residence at Avignon and came entirely under French influence, things changed. France was the deadly enemy of England; the hundred years' war had broken out be-

tween the two countries. All the different classes of the garded it as a chain of predatory excursions, from which they always returned laden with treasures. The peasants were saved by it from the rapacity and robbery of the knights, who committed their deeds of violence in a foreign country instead of at home. The war prevented the invasion of the Netherlands by the French, so that her woolen trade with England could be carried on undisturbed.

The war with France was for England, therefore, a national affair, in which all classes were equally interested. But the pope at Avignon had sunk to the position of a tool in the hands of the enemy, and to support him with money therefore amounted to high treason against their own country. Thus, for the first time, all classes, the king, the nobility, the knights, the citizens and the peasants, even a part of the clergy, united against the omnipotence and system of spoliation of the papacy.

In their many uprisings the peasants based their communistic principles on the doctrine of the Apostles and the fathers of the Church. They found religious justification for their principles in the Gospel. They wanted to re-establish the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles. It was rather difficult for the Church to proclaim these original Christian doctrines heresies and to declare the accumulation of unmeasurable riches true Christianity. But the cunning of the holy fathers was able to overcome this difficulty. The descendants of Peter, so it was said, had to administer the property of the whole congregation; Christendom was only one great congregation. The people had to remain in humbleness and poverty, for only in this way could they hope for salvation. A rich man could no more enter the kingdom of heaven than a camel pass through a needle's eye. The last should be the first. The more one suffered in this world, the more certain became the eternal salvation of his soul. With such twaddle the people were fooled. But these doctrines also could be traced back to the Gospel, so that both parties could claim that their principles were based on true "Christianity."

But now a new "religious" problem arose. In the com-

mon war on the papacy, in which the peasants fought shoulder to shoulder with the nobility, the latter had naturally never contemplated sharing the booty wrung from the Church with the lower classes. The nobility had no use for a communistic principle. They were very well satisfied to let the peasants and citizens stand by them in the war, but it never occurred to them, even in their dreams, to share the plunder with them. The enormous property was to be taken away from the Church, but their possessors henceforth were not to be the citizens and the peasants, but the king and the nobility. To justify this principle by religious dogmas; to prove that "true Christianity" was contained in it, was the new problem with which the "Reformation" of the Church was to occupy itself. Above all, "learned" men of reputation and importance had to be found, who were able to propound such a principle of Christianity.

Such a man was found in John Wycliffe, a professor at the University of Oxford. We see, in him, the actual founder of that religious principle on which the mighty movement, called by history the "Reformation," is based.

Like all other opponents of the papacy, he also proclaimed the doctrines of the early Christian congregations, among whom absolute community of goods reigned. He glorified the poverty of Christ, and set it up in contrast to the luxury and debauchery of the Christian clergy. He condemned all personal property among the "followers of Christ" and demanded of them the same renunciation and the same distribution of goods that Christ had demanded of his disciples. But under the "followers of Christ" he understood only the clergy, not the rest of Christendom. His doctrine, therefore, demanded that the enormous property of the Church be expropriated and divided between king and the nobility. No mention, in fact, was made at all of citizens and peasants. This, of course, suited the nobility perfectly. This was a "Reformation" such as they had wished for, and Wycliffe, consequently, was under the assured protection of the most prominent men of England.

We would, however, do Wycliffe, as well as his suc-

cessors, a great injustice if we regard them merely as tools in the hands of secular rulers. Wycliffe's opposition arose from genuine indignation against the shamelessness with which the pope and the clergy had prostituted the Christian Church, and his doctrine was directed mainly against papal authority. The attack on other dogmatic points was of a more subordinate nature. The most important articles of his doctrine are the following:

1. That images are not to be worshiped.
2. That the relics of saints are not to be worshiped.
3. That Christ gave power to Peter, as also to the other Apostles, and not to the pope, his pretended messenger, to bind and loose within the Church.
4. That after the consecration in the mass, wine and bread are not the true blood and body of Christ.
5. That tithes ought not to be given to ecclesiastical men wholly, but a part to the poor, widows, and orphans.
6. That the pope is not the successor of Peter.
7. That the pope deceives the people by his bulls and his indulgences.
8. That the mass profiteth not the souls who in those days were said to be in purgatory.
9. That the pope and the bishops deceive the people by their Cantona.
10. That indulgences ought not to be granted to fight against the Saracens.
11. That the pope can not remit the pains of purgatory.
12. That the blessings of the bishops are of no value.
13. That the excommunication of the Church is not to be feared if there be no true cause for it.
14. That priests may have wives.
15. That true Christians receive the body of Jesus Christ every day by faith.
16. That after matrimony be contracted, the Church may make no divorcement.
17. That the pope forgives no sin, but only God.
18. That faith should not be given to miracles such as the Romish are up to this day.

19. That we should not pray to the glorious Virgin Mary.

20. That we are no more bound to pray in the church than in other places..

21. That the pope and his ministers are murderers of the soul.

22. That they who are called the princes and prelates of the Church are thieves and robbers.

These articles are no less characteristic of orthodox faith in the Gospel than of contempt for the papacy. It was the last point alone that concerned the aristocracy and the people—withdrawal from the pope and expropriation of the property of the Church. What did it matter to the people, what significance was attributed to the wine and bread of the Last Supper, so long as they had nothing to eat at home? What did a knight care about the souls in purgatory? For them the only question was that of property, of pounds and pence.

The only article that had any social economic importance was the abolishment of the celibacy of the priests. Priestly celibacy was by no means an institution that originated in such ideal notions as are usually accredited to it, namely, that the priests should have no ideal other than the Church and should give themselves body and soul to the pursuit of religious matters. If priests had families, it would be natural that they care for the material welfare of their children, and leave them their property after death. The enormous wealth, such as forms the property of the Church, would soon pass into secular hands and the Church would lose power and importance. So, no matter at what point one approaches it, it is always a question of "the money of the realm" with the Church.

During his life John Wycliffe was too well protected by the aristocrats to become the victim of the pope's vengeance. Only forty years after his death it was decided at the council in Constance to burn his poor skeleton as that of a heretic, which was actually done in the year 1429. But his doctrine laid the cornerstone of the "Reformation," which was to take place a hundred years later.

The principles of the opposing parties in this matter were, therefore, as follows: Papacy strove for the greatest spiritual and secular power and defended its enormous real estate, which in many states consisted of more than half the entire land. The secular sovereigns, the kings and princes, wanted to shake off the papal yoke, and were eager to take possession themselves of the immense fortune of the Church. The people, above all others the peasants, referring to the Gospel, displayed communistic desires. The knight-hood hovered among the different parties and spied about to see where it could derive the most advantage for itself.

When, after the general war against the Church in England, the peasants saw themselves cheated of their reward, they arose in a violent revolt against the government. The cause of this peasant war is usually ascribed to a disgraceful assault, said to have been made by a revenue officer upon the daughter of Wat Tyler. But accidental occurrences like this are not able to disturb the natural law of historical development. The revolt of the peasants was a natural, even a necessary, result of existing conditions. The revolt is also said to have broken out in different places simultaneously.

The peasants were at first successful, and the king, Richard II., had to condescend to arbitrate with them. He agreed to all their demands, which, modestly enough, consisted merely of the attainment of their personal liberty. But when their leader, Wat Tyler, upon the request of the king, went to him for the purpose of further negotiations, the king had him stabbed to death from behind, and accused him of treason to the insurgents, at the same time offering himself as their leader.

Of course all this was done to deceive the peasants, so as to gain enough time to gather a great army. As soon as this had been accomplished, Richard threw off the mask and again turned against the revolutionists. When these sent representatives to him to remind him of his promise, he called to them contemptuously: "You have always been serfs, and you are now serfs. You shall remain in bondage; not in that in which you have laid heretofore, but in one

immeasurably worse. For as long as we live and with the grace of God govern this empire, we will use our position, our power and our fortune to so abuse you that your bondage will be a warning example to posterity."

This, after a criminal court proceeding in consequence of which 1,500 of their leaders were killed, ended the uprising of the peasants. But at the same time the opposition to the Church, which the nobles were unable to carry out without the assistance of the peasants, was broken. The expropriation of the property of the Church had, for the time being, to remain in abeyance.

This course of development, which the revolt against the papacy took in England, we see during the following centuries manifest itself quite analogously in different countries. For instance, if the appearance of Wycliffe is compared to the affair of John Huss, it will be found that from the beginning to the end, including the civil war that was the result of it, the events have altogether analogous manifestations. Is this a question, not of accident, but of fundamental psychological laws, on which these historical phenomena are based?

Like all analogous occurrences, the matters connected with Huss are judged from two extremely different viewpoints.

These see in the Huss agitation, as well as in the following Hussite wars, only a religious fanaticism. The articles formulated by Wycliffe, and further developed by Huss, were, according to this conception, the only purpose of all those struggles. Especially the demand that the laity be given the sacrament "in both forms," had formed the principal issue, on which the Hussites had insisted fanatically. As is well known, since the thirteenth century, the use of the chalice was restricted to the priests, and the Hussites, from their demanding the whole of the sacrament, were called "Utraquists." Those historians who see in this the only cause of the long and bloody wars, prefer to point out the "narrow mindedness" of that time and to praise the liberal and advanced spirit that has developed in the meantime.

The others consider the religious element in this entire occurrence merely a pretense. The difference in the sacrament was called the "field badge" of the two parties. The sacrament in "one" form represented the Papal party, the sacrament in "both forms" the Bohemian insurgents. Religion itself was to have nothing to do with it.

Both conceptions contain a grain of truth, but for this very reason both are incorrect in their extreme form. It was neither a purely religious war, nor must the importance of the religious element be under-valued. The conditions were exactly analogous to those of the time of the first Christian congregations. By worshipping Christ instead of the Roman Gods, the Christians would never have got in political conflict with the government. The persecutions were not intended for the worshipers of Christ, but for the agitators and founders of communistic congregations. On the other hand, if social and political matters had been the only things in question, the first Christians would never have become those enthusiasts and fanatics who were ready to let themselves be tortured to death for their faith, and who, in spite of those most cruel attempts at oppression, succeeded in maintaining and spreading their doctrine.

What the woolen trade and the French predatory excursions were for England in the fourteenth century, the rich silver mines, particularly that of Kattenburg, were for Bohemia, making it one of the richest countries of Europe. The brilliant reign of Ottokar II. is due to this wealth. Charles I. was through it enabled to buy the electoral votes, as well as the support of the pope, for the election as emperor, so that he could ascend the German throne as Charles IV.

Charles' inclination to the pope continued even after he came to the throne, in fact it was so pronounced that he was called the "Pfaffen Kaiser." Under him the Inquisition raged furiously in Germany; stakes burned from one end of the country to the other. The wealth that he turned over to the Church was fabulous. "The archbishops of Prague owned seventeen large domains in Bohemia, besides the estate of Kojetein in Maehren, Luhe in Bavaria,



and a great many smaller estates. The splendor of their courts often rivaled that of the king in brilliance, and an army of vassals stood ready to serve them at all times."

Aeneas Sylvius, afterwards known as Pope Pius II., writes:<sup>181</sup> "I believe, that in our time there was no other country in Europe, in which there were to be found so many, so magnificent, so richly decorated churches as in Bohemia. The churches were of a colossal height; the high altars were laden with gold and silver caskets, which enclosed the relics of the saints; the robes of the priests were embroidered with pearls; the whole decoration was extremely rich, all the furnishings the most expensive; . . . and these were not to be admired only in cities, but in little villages as well."

Charles IV. was a man of high education and was genuinely devoted to art and science. He spoke five languages and is considered the most learned emperor of the Middle Ages. He founded the University of Prague, the first one in Germany, on the model of the Paris high school. He decorated the city with magnificent buildings and bridges, so that Prague was spoken of as "the golden city" during his reign. In consequence of the wealth which the silver mines gave the country, trade and industry developed also, and Charles did much to advance them by restoring internal peace by pulling down the strongholds that threatened the safety of the roads.

This flourishing condition of Bohemia was soon inevitably to call forth the same conditions which under similar circumstances developed everywhere, that is, the accumulation of capital in the hands of the owners of large industries, on the one hand, and the poverty and discontent of the working class on the other. To this was added another series of circumstances, which aroused general dissatisfaction among the people.

Charles IV. was mainly concerned about the welfare of his hereditary country, and, therefore, used his position as emperor of Germany solely to advance the rise and increase of his Bohemian kingdom. Emperor Maximilian called him "the Father of Bohemia, the arch-stepfather of the Holy Roman

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<sup>181</sup>History of Bohemia.

Empire," and it was really Charles' desire and effort to make the empire an appendage of Bohemia. But for this very reason, to accomplish this, to raise the low, slavish civilization of Bohemia to a higher plane, he found it necessary to induce German peasants, mechanics, and merchants, as well as German artists and scholars, to immigrate into Bohemia. Thus it soon happened that the well-to-do classes in the cities were Germans, while the lower workingmen and day laborers were native Czechs.

The University of Prague was also almost exclusively in the hands of Germans. The management was equally divided among Bohemians, Bavarians, Saxons, and Poles, so that the Bohemians had only one of the four votes. All the richer endowments for professors and students which the university possessed were in the hands of Germans. In the same way all the higher offices in the Church were filled by Germans.

Great discontent reigned among the lower aristocracy. The large German industrials and the large real estate owners, who also partly were Germans, had absorbed all their sources of income, and the knight-robbers were prevented from carrying on their work by the strong hand of the emperor. The peasants whom, as in England, it was attempted to force again into serfdom, were equally dissatisfied.

Thus all classes of native Bohemians had a common hatred against the clergy and against the Germans, whom they considered their despoilers. While the Germans in Germany had to suffer the drain put upon them by the popes, like all other nations, they were body and soul for the Church in Bohemia, because they had the best chances of remunerative posts among the clergy and in the monasteries. The University, too, was, above all, a theological institute in which the Germans had the upper hand.

Such were the conditions in Bohemia when John Huss, together with his friend Hieronymus, publicly declared himself in favor of the doctrines of Wycliffe. The tension had increased to such a degree in Bohemia that only a drop was needed to cause the flood of discontent to overflow.

This occurred through the trade in indulgences which was carried on by Pope John XXIII. because he needed money. Huss most emphatically opposed this evil, and declared the pope the Anti-Christ. The German doctors of the University took the part of the pope and caused the archbishop, Sbinko, to issue a prohibition against Wycliffe's doctrines. The fury of the Bohemians, aroused by this procedure, succeeded in obtaining the concession from Wenzel that henceforth the Bohemians were to have three and the others only one vote in the University. The result was the well-known emigration of all the German professors and students, five thousand in number, and the founding of the University of Leipzig.

When, following this, the archbishop had the writings of Wycliffe burned, the people, who saw in this action an open partisanship of the Germans, arose in wrath. They plundered churches and monasteries, and many acts of violence took place. But when the pope again reopened his trade in indulgences, and promised every one who contributed money to make war on Ladislaus of Naples complete absolution, Huss and Hieronymus publicly opposed him. As a consequence, there was open revolt against the magistracy and the officials of the Church.

Now the Pope, John XXIII., pronounced the excommunication of Huss and Hieronymus, and the upper classes began to withdraw from Huss because he sympathized too much with the lower classes. Wenzel, too, who until now had given him his protection, drew back, in fear of the pope. Huss, under the assurance of a "safe-conduct" from the emperor, was invited to appear before the Council at Constance. The pope, too, assured him that "no evil should befall him, though he had murdered the pope's own brother."

The condemnation and burning at the stake of John Huss, in spite of the emperor's assurance, is too well known to be told here in detail. Only on the question as to the motive of this atrocity there still seems to be considerable doubt. It was well known that the council had been convened, above all, to set aside the schism, and the popes

were, therefore, too much occupied with themselves to bother much about Huss. It is, therefore, usually claimed that his judges were equally at enmity with the popes as he himself, and that "scientific jealousy" and party quarrels were the cause of Huss' downfall. The old adversaries, the "realists" and "nominalists," were said to be the real cause of the frightful act of violence. "Those who murdered him," it is said, "were not the popes, whom he had opposed, but they who, like him, made the papacy the object of their attacks . . . it was done by those very doctors and prelates who proved themselves the bitterest enemies and persecutors of Huss, because he did not belong to their school."

This view, though it is set forth in most historical works, is absolutely wrong, and no one who is guided by it can possibly form a correct judgment of this important epoch in history.

Those men who condemned Huss, that is, all the cardinals and bishops of the council of Constance, had in no way previously made the popedom the object of their attacks. Quite the contrary. They tried to save it when threatened by the schism, and to restore it to renewed brilliance. The "object of their attacks" was not the papacy, but a few individual popes. The high clergy can never turn against the popedom, as such, without undermining their own existence. It was intended, at the council, to force the popes to abdicate, or to remove them, so as to elect a new pope and thereby restore the popedom to its former greatness. But Huss, like his predecessor, Wycliffe, attacked the Apostolic See as such. He did not attack the person of the pope, but the institution of this office. The cardinals wanted to get rid of Pope John XXIII. for political motives, and for this reason set up seventy articles of complaint against him. He was accused of having poisoned Alexander V., of having lain with his brother's wife, of having seduced three hundred nuns, of having denied the resurrection and eternal life, etc. In spite of these atrocities, it was not moral indignation which caused the cardinals to bring their charges, but he was accused because, for political reasons, it was de-

sirable to depose him. Huss, in his innocence and straightforwardness, thought and felt quite differently. His was one of those natures which retain a great childlike soul until the end of life. Political abuses were strangers to him; he probably did not even understand them. He was the embodiment of sincerity. The frivolous lives of the popes thoroughly disgusted him, and they confirmed his belief that the papal chair could not be a divine institution. Freely and openly he expressed this opinion, and asked the people to liberate themselves from the pope. It is true, in his innocence, he firmly believed that he was preaching exactly what the cardinals said in their charges against the pope. He did not discern the tremendous difference between his viewpoint and theirs. He could not understand why he should be declared guilty, just because he was in the right.

When Huss went to Constance, he relied far less on the emperor's "safe-conduct" than on his consciousness of not having done anything which the great lords at Constance had not done before him. So much the greater was his surprise when he was received there as a "heretic." It was no less difficult for the cardinals to maintain their position in a dignified manner. Huss had really said nothing different from what they had said themselves; but, in the first place, Huss was a professor of the University, and in the second, he had spoken to the people, and had, by his speeches, instigated them against the Church. He had also destroyed the influence of the Church in the University. But the cardinals dared not reproach him with all this. They dared not say to him: "Yes, you are right in the matter. But one does not say such things to the people. The people must simply obey, and look up to the Church." Huss was of so straight and childlike a nature that he would scarcely have understood such remarks.

The people having been instigated against the Church, it was the main concern of the cardinals to make Huss publicly confess that he had been mistaken. They wanted to make him "abjure," so that the people would become quiet again. Emperor Sigismund had the same interest in

the matter. It is a direct untruth when historians claim that the emperor had opposed the condemnation of Huss and at last agreed to it merely from absolute necessity. Sigismund was inimical to Huss at the Council from the very beginning, and urged him, as the cardinals did, "to abjure." He had just as great an interest in the matter as the clergy, for the Bohemian revolution was directed, as we have seen, against the Church and against the Germans.

Poor Huss did not know what had happened to him and continually insisted that he did not even know what he should abjure. Since the matter could not be more explicitly explained to him, and he naturally insisted that he had said nothing but what his accusers and judges had said themselves, a whole list of charges was invented, merely to persuade him to abjure. To kill him was far less important to the cardinals than to get him to recant. They well knew that his death would irritate the people still more, while a confession of guilt on his part probably would calm them. They accused him of having placed himself as the fourth Deity next to the Trinity, a most absurd invention. They tried in every possible way to make it clear to him that it was immaterial whether the accusations were true or not, that he should only "abjure." He was visited daily in prison for the purpose of explaining to him that a good Christian must unconditionally submit to those in authority, and that therefore it was his duty to submit to the council. "If the council says," one of the prelates said to him, "you have only one eye, even if you have two, you should still admit to the council that it is so."

All these attempts failed through the firm religious faith that Huss manifested throughout. The confession of a wrong which he had not committed, appeared a grievous sin to him, and he preferred to die the most fearful death rather than burden his soul with such a sin. To the very last moment attempts were made to save him from the flames and to persuade him to recant—of course not from humane motives, but from those of purest egoism; for the consequences of his death were greatly feared. Even after he had been deprived by the priests of all his honors, and

the cap with the devils painted on it had been placed upon his head, and after he had been delivered to the secular authorities to be executed, the bishops turned to Emperor Sigismund and said: "This Holy Synod at Constance now surrenders John Huss, who has no further position nor direction in the Church of God, to earthly power and judgment. Nevertheless the bishops, prelates, and priests have petitioned the Roman king and the secular powers that be, not to have this poor unfortunate put to death, but to confine him in prison for the rest of life." But the emperor cried out to Count Palatine Ludwig: "Since we wield the sword of earthly power to punish this evil, count, I bid you take this man, John Huss, and in our name have done to him what a heretic deserves."

The fear of the consequences of John Huss' death proved to be well-founded in every respect. In September of the same year, the Bohemian Diet issued a statement to the council at Constance, in which it was said: "You have convicted and shamefully put to death John Huss, a preacher of the word, on the false accusations of his enemies and those of the Bohemian Kingdom, to our eternal disgrace and that of our country. We publicly protest that this man never taught anything opposed to the Church, and declare everyone, no matter of what rank he may be, who claims that our people are infested with heresy, a miserable scoundrel, traitor, and shameful heretic and leave this child of the devil to the vengeance of God, but our preachers we will protect with the last drop of blood in our veins."

The prolonged struggles following this occurrence known in history as the "Wars of the Hussites" undoubtedly had their origin in social conditions, in the general discontent of the Bohemians of all ranks, in hatred towards both the great despoilers of the country, the Church and the Germans. But the religious element is far from being merely the outer pretext. The people felt themselves deeply insulted in their most sacred sentiments. Their beloved teacher, whom they look up to as a God, had been frightfully and unjustly burned at the stake, upon absolutely false accusations. His religious views and doctrines became

their sacred inheritance, for which they were ready to shed the last drop of their blood. The chalice in the sacrament became "the symbol of their party," inasmuch as it was an important point in Huss' doctrine. The social and religious elements, therefore, formed a common cause for those wars. Social discontent was the incentive of the war; religious loyalty lent it that fanatic enthusiasm which it alone is able to arouse.

In spite of the pope's threat to have all the adherents of Huss' doctrine burned at the stake, the revolt steadily assumed greater dimensions, so that finally Wenzel, on being urged by his brother, Emperor Sigismund, saw himself compelled to dismiss from his court all those favorable to Huss' doctrine. Among these was the talented Ziska, who now became the leader of the revolutionists.

After the first enthusiasm of the Bohemians had to a certain degree abated, the natural class-differences and their interests again came more and more into evidence. The same phenomenon that took place in the general war of the English against the oppression of the Church, appeared here. Different parties also were formed among the Bohemians.

A small part of the nobility, not wishing to separate its interests from those of the court, remained loyal to the old faith. But the majority remained closely interwoven with the Huss affair, being forced thereto by the Church properties confiscated by them. The upper class of citizens also belonged to this party, they, too, having an equal interest in the division of the Church property. Consequently Prague became the center of this party, who were called the "Calixtines" and were distinguished as the "temperate party."

The democrats were called "Taborites," after the city of Tabor, which was the headquarters of their party. It was made up chiefly of peasants and small freeholders of the cities. Their leader, who everywhere distinguished himself by bravery and heroism, was Ziska.

The Germans in Bohemia were the most zealous Catholics and bitter opponents of the Hussites. The silver mines



at Kuttenberg were in their hands, and victory for the Hussites meant the loss of most of their property. They were, therefore, the most fanatic opponents of the new doctrine. They had every Hussite who fell into their hands burned to death. It is said that the Kuttengerbers had offered sixty "groschen" for an ordinary heretic and three hundred for a heretic priest.

It could be only a question of time when the nobility would cease to act in common with the citizens and peasants. Their interests were too widely separated for them to strive for the same end for any length of time. A dissension arose between the Calixtines and the Taborites, so that the latter now turned their fanatical wrath against all those Bohemian cities which were opposed to them. Their priests commanded them to carry out the vengeance of Christ against all who denied him. "Accursed be he who keeps his sword unstained by blood." Monasteries and churches were destroyed. The atrocities committed against men, women, and children were equally appalling on all sides. After all the men who had defended the city of Komotau had perished, the Taborite women dragged their wives into a building, to which they then set fire. The old chiliastical views were spread anew among the people. All cities not belonging to the true faith were to be burned. Thousands of citizens and peasants sold their property, and with wives and children moved into the wilderness to sit at the feet of the Apostles and listen to the "Word of God." The communistic preachers proclaimed the millennium. Christ would descend in all his splendor, and found a kingdom in which there would be neither masters nor slaves, neither sin nor want, and no other laws but those of the free spirit. Those still living, set back into a condition of paradisaical innocence, would know no more bodily sufferings nor want, nor would they need the Holy Sacrament of the Church to purify them of their sins.

The fundamental laws of the Taborites are communistic in character, socially as well as religiously. "In these times," it is stated in one of the articles adopted by them, "there will be on earth neither king nor ruler, nor a sub-

ject, and all taxes and duties will cease. No one will be forced to do anything, for all will be equal brothers and sisters. Just as in the city of Tabor there is no mine and thine, but everything is common property, so everything shall always be common to all, no one shall have any particular property, and he who has such commits a deadly sin." As to church matters, they demand that all churches be torn down and everybody worship God at all times and in all places. Every layman could become a priest, and was eligible for election by the congregation. They laid great stress on the education of children, who were all to learn to read and write, at that time a rare accomplishment. Of course this education, as, for that matter, all learning, was to be confined to a knowledge of the Bible. "Nothing shall be believed or observed by Christians that is not expressly said and written in the Bible, and outside of the Bible no writings of holy doctors or masters, or philosophers, shall be read, or taught, or preached, for they are human beings who might be mistaken; whoever, therefore, adheres to the seven arts or accepts a professorship in them, or allows himself to be called a master of the same, strives to imitate the heathen, is a vain person, and commits a deadly sin."

The tendencies of the Taborites were exactly like those of the early Christians. Their communism, like that of the earlier Christians, was based chiefly on common and equal consumption and a remarkable disregard of the means of production. Such a state of affairs could not last any length of time. In the beginning, tremendous enthusiasm helped them over all difficulties. Ziska called his men "warriors of God," and this brave band of combatants really performed almost inconceivable deeds of valor. Pope Martin V. had five crusades undertaken against these excommunicated heretics. But one army after the other was miserably beaten by the brave Hussites, so that finally, whole troops took to flight on the mere report that the Hussites were approaching, not daring to encounter them in battle.

In spite of all this, the Hussites, like all communists before and after them, had to succumb. They were not conquered by the force of arms, but by the utter impossibility

of their own system, by their internal dissensions. The nobility would long since have separated themselves from them, had they not feared to lose the stolen church properties. After the pope and the emperor realized that they could accomplish nothing by force of arms, they began to negotiate with the Calixtines, and declared themselves willing not to consider their church-robbing as such, and to leave the nobility in possession of their estates. Instead of demanding the return of the booty, the pope even sent messengers to Prague with money, to support the nobility in their war against the Taborites.

In spite of this change in the state of affairs, the Taborites under their strong leader, Prokop, who, after the death of Ziska, had taken the leadership, remained unconquered. But now internal disputes and strife broke out among them. The war, carried on for the most part on Bohemian soil, had devastated the country and brought irreparable loss to the people. The peasants were tired of the war and longed for peace. When the war, in consequence of the victories of the Bohemian arms, turned from the defensive into the offensive, and the neighboring cities began to be plundered, the rabble from all countries flocked to the Bohemian banner, there to try their luck. The original "warriors of God" became a gang of bandits, reveling in holocaust and murder. Their murderous bands spread in all directions, to Hungary, Austria, Silesia, and Pomerania. The religious enthusiasm which had been the main incentive of the revolutionists had long since been quenched, and a number of parties who fought and finally destroyed one another came into being.

The great tragedy which took place from the first appearance of John Huss until the end of the Hussite wars, is of particular interest to our especial purpose. We have here closely allied all possible eventualities offered to Christianity, and by the study of the single persons of the tragedy we can form an opinion of what influence Christianity had on mankind, and on conditions prevailing at that time, as well as on the development of civilization.

The pope, who personally appeared at the council, and

then became a fugitive from it, John XXIII., was a miserable scoundrel, a murderer, a miscreant, whom we would prefer to consider as the overdrawn figure of the villain of a drama rather than as a real man. That such monstrosities of Nature really exist, can not be helped, is no one's fault. But that such an individual was made pope, that such a monster of wickedness could be made the most important person in the Christian Church, the "representative of Christ," shows what kind of people the members of the Church were. But if one considers that this pope was by no means an exception, that his was the clay from which all the other popes were modeled; if one considers that the accusations against the pope were not made because of indignation at his wickedness but that it was deemed advisable for political reasons to dispose him, one can only look down with pity and contempt on a religion that could make such persons the representatives of their Deity.

Huss was not condemned by a single judge or by a court of judges, but by the entire council at Constance. Consequently, it was not a question of one individual, not a question of the wickedness of one person, but of a gathering of the highest members of the clergy of all countries, who pronounced sentence upon him. The elite of the clergy of Italy, Germany, France, England, and Spain were present. There were 29 cardinals, 49 archbishops, 116 bishops, not even to mention the rest of the clergy and the secular princes. They all sat in judgment on John Huss. They all condemned him as a miserable heretic. Not a single one raised his voice in his defense. Not one of the 29 cardinals had the slightest scruple in sending an innocent man to the stake. They all knew that he was innocent—all these cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, about 200 in number, knew it, and not one spoke a word in his favor. And knowing that he was innocent, they invented the most absurd accusations, such as that he wanted to make himself the fourth Deity, and demanded of him that he "abjure" these things, which was the same as a confession of guilt. Every single one of them knew that these accusations were

purest invention, and not a single person raised his voice in his behalf.

What was to be expected of the general morality of a people, if the highest and noblest of them formed such a band of criminals? In this gathering of cardinals and bishops was manifested most plainly what a curse Christianity has been to all mankind. Never has another religion or any other doctrine so corrupted the morals of mankind, as has Christianity. Never were the conceptions of right and wrong, of good and evil, so distorted and actually turned upside-down as at the time when Christianity was at its height.

Now Sigismund may appear on the scene! Just look at a German emperor, who publicly, without the slightest hesitation, breaks his word of honor. Who, today, would not have the greatest contempt for such a knave? An emperor who consciously allows an innocent person to be falsely accused and then gives him up to the stake! Abominable! What a miserable criminal! And still, the human conscience, which even Christianity had not been able to stifle altogether, was aroused in the emperor. He had to blush when Huss looked him in the face and reminded him of his word of honor. But every noble impulse had to succumb to the merciless sword of Christian revenge. The emperor not only deemed himself justified in his own eyes and in those of the world, but had a right to believe that he had done his duty. Had he not been taught from his youth up that one need not keep one's word to a heretic; that to punish a miserable heretic was the highest duty of a good Christian, and that the emperor could have no more important duty to God and man than to rid the world of these "damned heretics?" The religion which, it is claimed, ennobled mankind, can boast of having turned emperors into scoundrels.

And now we come upon the sad figure of the hero of this tragedy, John Huss. We see him standing before us with the pasteboard bishop's cap, painted with devils, on his head. All about him the fagots are lighted, to consume him, an innocent man. With his right hand on his

heart, he raises his eyes to heaven in a last prayer to his Lord and Creator. Poor, much-to-be-pitied fool! He remained firm to the very last moment, and died a martyr for his faith. The glance, directed to heaven, he hoped would, as soon as the earthly shell was burned, encounter his "Redeemer." As Christ had suffered and died, so he, too, wanted to perish. He hoped, with the end of his earthly existence, to achieve the beginning of eternal salvation. In the kingdom of God he expected to find compensation for the death agonies prepared for him by his persecutors. How pathetic is this innocent, childlike faith! How sad, how pitiable! A fine, noble character led astray by a foolish nursery tale! Martyrdom is beautiful and ideal, if suffered for a noble object. A man who sacrifices himself for the good of his fellow-men will always excite our admiration and serve as an example to posterity. But to suffer and die for an empty phantom, to become a victim of folly and superstition and therein to seek martyrdom, is most pathetic. It can arouse our pity and regret, but not our admiration. The more bitter must be the feelings called forth in us by a doctrine which creates such folly and superstition, that condemns ideally disposed people, who could have become the greatest blessing to their fellow-men, to suffer purposeless martyrdom, which could benefit neither them nor others.

And now our glance rests upon the people, whose endless struggle, whose devastating civil wars form the conclusion of this great tragedy. Above all we perceive those inevitable phenomena which the struggle for existence has produced at all periods of history, and which returned everywhere in a different form. The nobles were jealous of the wealth of the Church; the citizens were envious of the privileges granted to the nobles; the proletariat of the cities, as well as the peasants, were driven to want and despair by the spoliation of the upper classes, particularly the clergy. Conditions like this, and the wars resulting from them, can be observed in all periods of history. So far as human traditions go, they were always an essential factor in the historical development of the civilization of

nations. But, what is of special interest to us, is the question, What influence in this case did Christianity exert on the course of these events? We saw that the shameless sale of indulgences, the accumulation of enormous wealth in the hands of the clergy, the oppression and spoliation of the people by the clergy, were the external incentives to those frightful civil wars that lasted more than tens of years. But did Christianity do anything to modify the wild passions of the people? Were the wars among the Christian brethren less cruel and bloody than similar wars among heathen nations? Did Christianity, which constantly boasts of love for one's neighbor, and even insists on love towards one's enemies, do anything by way of practicing this theoretical doctrine? No! Indeed not! In all of this, Christianity has done exactly the contrary. It fanned all the lower passions of men to the greatest fury and violently stifled all their nobler impulses.

The nobility had no other thought than to steal for themselves the wealth accumulated by the Church, and to keep it from the people. The lower classes of the people were stirred up to a fanaticism that made monsters of them. Women became hyenas. How far must moral degeneration have advanced, when women turned against their own sex, and burned them and their children alive! The people were kept in ignorance and stupidity, and superstition never before attained such a destructive power as at that time. The Christian priests, no matter to which party they belonged, instigated the people to violence and cruelty rarely dreamed of before. A price was put on the head of every heretic. There was no end to incendiarism and murder.

This great drama came at last to its termination by the people annihilating one another. Like hungry wolves, like raging monsters, Christian brethren fell upon one another, until, at last, everything was destroyed and new energy had to be gathered on all sides—merely to begin the tragedy all over again, only on a far greater scale than anybody would have dreamed possible.

If the question is asked whether in the entire Huss tragedy Christianity benefited only one single person, the

unpartial observer must answer, "No"; Christianity not only never benefited any one, but turned human beings into fiends, infinitely worse than the vilest creatures of hell. From the highest dignitaries of Christendom, from the cardinals down to the proletariat of loafers and peasants, the lowest passions were everywhere aroused, and the entire "Huss" affair does not contain a single feature capable of reconciling us, even ever so little, to Christianity.

#### 5. THE REFORMATION.

The age of the Reformation has been hailed by modern writers as the glorious rise of the golden morning sun, which, shedding its brilliant rays over the universe, has illumined the world after an endless period of impenetrable darkness and despair. Indeed, that frightful period of a thousand years, from the beginning of Christianity up to the Reformation was surely dark enough. Fully a thousand years of the most frightful cruelty, of human bestiality! It is also true that our present civilization, no matter what one may think of it, in comparison with those gruesome Middle Ages, represents an enormous progress, which can not be too highly appreciated. Altogether different, however, are our views regarding the questions as to what part the "Reformation" of the Christian Church had in this progress. In speaking of the time of the Reformation one has in mind, as a rule, above all, or even exclusively, the upheavals in the domain of the Church. But those days were marked by other factors which were of enormous importance in the development of civilization.

The invention of the art of printing added more than anything else to a radical revolution in all domains of human endeavor. It has justly been said that without the art of printing there could have been only barbarians in the world. This is perfectly correct and can not be invalidated even by the high development of art and science among the ancient nations. With them it could always be only a question of the mental education of a comparatively few individuals, while the great masses remained in a state of ignorance and illiteracy. In the large cities, in Athens, Corinth, and



Sparta, the youths were educated by means of lectures. The history of their forefathers was handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Historians read their books on particular occasions, as, for instance, Herodotus did in Olympia. But all this could not reach and therefore could not educate the masses. According to our present ideas, the degree of the civilization of a nation is not gauged by the accomplishment of a few philosophers, poets, and artists, but by the degree of education acquired by the average man. But the great mass of the people can not obtain any knowledge without printed matter. Just attempt to imagine what the world would be like without the art of printing, that is, without books, without newspapers, without magazines. Thanks to this blessed invention, every kitchen maid today possesses more knowledge and has a higher philosophy than the bravest knight had in the Middle Ages.

It was by no means mere accident that the world at the time of the Reformation was moved by so many different factors. The reformation of the Church, or, rather, the emancipation from popedom, the renaissance of the old classic arts and sciences, the great progress made in the various domains of human endeavors—all these owed their origin to the invention of the art of printing, which took place about fifty years previously. Without it, none of all these things would have been possible. Had the art of printing been invented a hundred years sooner, the revolts of the Hussites would not have terminated without any permanent success. At that time Huss himself, as well as his writings, could be burned, and the people kept in ignorance. Luther, as well as the other reformers of the sixteenth century, could of course also have been burned, but their works would have continued to live and would have agitated the people the more potently as they were aroused by all sorts of pamphlets. It is true, they attempted, in many places, to burn Luther's books; but, at most, this could have had only a symbolic meaning, inasmuch as the act might serve as a sign of condemnation. The books, of which thou-

sands of copies had been printed and distributed all over the country, could not be annihilated.

The enormous difference between modern times and the older periods of history consists in the fact that now all the achievements of the human mind to a greater or less extent become the common property of all, while formerly only a few privileged persons became aware of them. And this all-important fact is solely the result of the art of printing. It would, therefore, be far more correct to ascribe the beginning of a new epoch in history to that important invention than to hold the so-called "Reformation" of the Christian Church responsible for it. To demonstrate the influence which the "Reformation" had on the progress of general civilization, and to consider the "blessing" it brought to mankind, is the object of the following discourse.

The shamelessness of the papacy and the higher clergy had, at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, reached its climax. Following their example, all grades of the population of Germany were permeated by the most vulgar graft. From the imperial throne down to the most unimportant office, everything was to be had for money, and without money nothing was attainable. Every one had his price. A business was made of every transaction. The electors sold their votes at the election of the emperor. The imperial dignity, which had become a mere shadow, was maintained by the electors only because every new election of an emperor meant a brilliant business coup for them. They allowed themselves to be bribed by all the candidates, and finally cast their votes in favor of the one who paid the most. The greatest avarice and the most vulgar means of satisfying it, were evinced by the two Hohenzollerns, the elector of Brandenburg, Joachim I., and his brother Albrecht, archbishop of Mainz and Magdeburg.

The nobles and the citizens were equally oppressed by the steadily increasing power of the principalities. The knights' manors, which the nobility had considered their own property, were taken possession of by the reigning princes under the claims of feudal tenure. The cities were put

under a taxation which they were hardly able to sustain. To make good their losses, the knights robbed and squeezed the citizens and the peasants until they were driven to desperation.

But the meanest despoilers of the people were the priests. They had taken possession of the best regions of the country. The Rhine, which Emperor Frederick III. had already called the priests' row, was almost exclusively in the hands of the priesthood. At the same time, most of the bishops did not bother about religious matters at all. They were, in fact, hunters and robbers, from whom no one's property was safe. Nevertheless, the priests were supported by the princes because these wanted to secure bishoprics for their relatives.

Just as in the highest dignities, so the less important offices in the curacy were traded to the highest bidder. It had gone so far in the matter of the numerous benefices that they were made a regular article of commerce. The sale of them was left to the large business houses, such as that of the Fuggers, who sold or rented them for a moderate commission to the highest bidder. Thus there were priests who possessed an enormous number of canonicates, without ever attending personally to any one of them.

Germany had, at that time, received a great boon, commercially and industrially. It owned great mines and could boast of widespread commercial intercourse. But for this very reason the hungry wolves from Rome fell the more eagerly on the country. England, France, and Spain had succeeded in putting a limit to the clerical system of spoliation. In these countries the booty of the depredators remained at least in the country, and redounded to the benefit of the ruling class, who filled all profitable offices and benefices with their own people. But in Germany the creatures of the pope occupied all the profitable church offices. Through the annates, the distribution of benefices to foreign cardinals, the levying of tithes, the demanding of perquisites, and the imposition of all imaginable churchly taxation, uncounted wealth poured into Rome. The love of splendor and ostentation of Pope Leo X., of the house of

Medici, had no limits and swallowed up inconceivable sums without ever being satisfied. The princes and the nobility publicly complained that their lands were being despoiled, without thereby daring to hope for redress.

Such were the conditions in Germany at the beginning of the sixteenth century. General discontent reigned among all ranks of the population, from princes down to peasants. Under the yoke of the system of spoliation of the pope, all classes had to suffer alike, and consequently it needed very little to bring the dissatisfaction caused thereby to open revolt.

The direct incentive thereto was furnished, as is well known, by the shamelessness with which the trade in indulgences was carried on at the time. The very doctrine of indulgence, as it was formulated by the Church, and generally preached as a Christian precept, is an insult to human intelligence!" Ah, "human intelligence!" Pitiful word! How can one even think of intelligence in dealing with Christian superstition?

According to this doctrine, the salvation of mankind was accomplished by the sacrifice of the blood of the Savior; but his good deeds were preserved for the attainment of other mercies. This treasure, which had, in the course of centuries, been increased by the surplus of good deeds performed by the large army of saints, was far too abundant to be used up in their own salvation and that of their worshipers. The care and administration of this treasure of surplus merits belonged to the representative of Christ on earth. He had the right and the power to give the sinner as much of this store of good deeds as were required for the salvation of his soul. He could also, by means of these holy merits, save the souls of departed ones, suffering in purgatory, or shorten their punishment. They dared to teach the people such nonsense, and, what was worse still, the people believed it.

The indulgence swindle reached its climax under the reign of Leo X., who stopped at nothing to get possession of more and more wealth.

The Dominican, John Tetzel, traveled through the coun-

try, by order of the holy father, with two large boxes, one of which contained all kinds of letters of indulgence for sins committed or yet to be committed, the other to be the repository of the enormous sums of money which had been squeezed from the people. In all the cities and villages through which he passed he built a big fire, planted beside it a red cross bearing the coat of arms of the pope, and showed the people the papal bull which authorized him to sell indulgences for all sorts of sins. The well-known motto: "If money chinks in the box, the souls escape from hell," drew thousands and thousands of people to the spot, who did not wish to miss the opportunity of accomplishing their own salvation and that of their immediate relatives. Many a poor old woman gave her last tiny coin to save her son's soul from the fires of hell. Thousands of poor people sacrificed the savings they had earned by the sweat of their brows for a piece of paper which proclaimed their salvation from purgatory, or the forgiveness of their sins. This noble commissary also had so-called "milk-and-butter licenses" for sale, the purchaser of which could eat milk and butter on fast days without clerical punishment. The price of indulgences was determined by the sins for which absolution was ought. To save a soul from hell cost, according to our reckoning, ten cents. For polygamy six ducats were paid, for perjury nine, for murder eight, and for sorcery two. Simson, who carried on a similar trade in Switzerland, had a different tariff. For example, for infanticide he asked four livres and for patricide or fratricide only one ducat.

What is even more remarkable than the depravity and infamy with which this swindle was carried on, is the fathomless stupidity of the people who made such deception possible. It was by no means only the lowest class who became the victims of the trade in indulgences; all ranks contributed to increase the treasures of the holy father.

How firmly mankind was under the ban of the pope, and how, even in the face of the most atrocious crimes, they deemed it impossible for the representative of God to err, is proven by the shyness and timidity of the attempts of the

opposition against a spoliation of the people, the meanness and viciousness of which every kitchen maid would recognize at the first glance today. Just think how Luther was marveled at when he first raised his voice against this abuse. And at that time it was only the trade in indulgences against which he turned; he did not intend to attack any other point of the pope's authority. He himself says, in later years, that he was at that time still "so intoxicated with the doctrines of the pope that he was ready to kill all those who refused even with one syllable to obey the pope." And how did he go to work to justify his opposition to the trade in indulgences? He pasted ninety-five theses to the church door at Wittenberg to prove that the trade in indulgences was not a divine institution; that the pope had no power to buy the release of souls in purgatory. So much fuss about a matter which we would characterize today with the two short words, "damned swindle." Luther invited "every expert" to an open disputation, so as to be able to publicly defend his opinion. How degenerate must the whole population have been if such means were necessary to brand a perfectly obvious swindle as such! And how frightfully all Christendom was to be poisoned by this swindle! It was not merely a question of simple robbery or spoliation of the people; that would have been innocent pastime in comparison with the demoralizing trade in indulgences. The robber-knights, who openly attacked their victims and stole their property, who did not even hesitate to kill an innocent person if he opposed them, carried on an innocent industry, when compared with the fiendish swindle of the papal indulgences. For they were open robbers and murderers, who only plunged their victims into misery, but did not make criminals of them. But the trade in indulgences, which put a fixed price on every crime, which did not even hesitate to sell forgiveness for crimes to be perpetrated, openly incited the people to the most atrocious deeds. What must the conditions have been when a patricide or fratricide stood justified before "God and man" after he had bought a miserable indulgence from the holy father? Everyone who had obtained sufficient indulgence papers, could, with

an easy conscience, steal, burn, and murder to his heart's content. And this was done in the name of that religion, of which it has been said that it has been the "greatest blessing" to mankind and has turned barbarians into "civilized" nations. That is the religion to which we are said to owe our present civilization.

Just as it is claimed that the "Reformation" of the Church is responsible for the progress of civilization during the last four centuries, so it is customary to regard Martin Luther as the hero and founder of the Reformation. Both views are incorrect. The indignation of the people against the insufferable system of spoliation practiced by the Church, and the emancipation of a part of Christendom from the pope, did not form the cause of the mental progress of mankind, but constituted rather one of the first symptoms of awakening from a sleep of dark superstition and fathomless ignorance. Likewise, Luther was not the founder and promulgator of the Reformation; but, on the contrary, was carried by the swelling floods of the developing spirit of freedom aroused in the people.

What Luther did, others before him had done in a far greater degree. Wycliffe, as well as Huss, energetically opposed the pope, and issued a whole series of maxims which were opposed to Christianity as it existed in their time.

Others, before Luther, opposed the indulgence swindle far more energetically and enthusiastically than he did. For example, John Wesel, professor at the Erfurt University, who died two years before Luther was born, called the pope "a monkey in a purple robe" and discoursed most strenuously against indulgences, confession, the last anointment, and even the communion.

How carefully and timidly, on the other hand, did Luther proceed! He had not the remotest intention to say anything against the pope, much less to separate from him. He raised his voice only against the shameless manner in which the trade in indulgences was carried on. He did not even wish to attack the indulgences as such. In the thirty-eighth thesis he expressly says: "Still the forgiveness of the pope and his dispensations are not to be despised." Luther

cherished the most orthodox religious faith. How strange was his sudden decision to leave parents and friends, without a word of farewell, and enter a monastery, because "God" had "protected him during a thunderstorm!" When in Rome, he crawled up the staircase of the Pilatus, which was said to have been transplanted from Jerusalem to Rome, to receive a promised indulgence. He never missed a pilgrim's service in the holy city. He "ran through all the churches and vaults." He read masses to save the souls of his friends from purgatory, and "he was really sorry that his father and mother still lived," so glad would he have been to save them, too, by his deeds and prayers. What kind of "reform" could emanate from such religious fanaticism? Luther never strove for more liberal, more enlightened religious views, for the emancipation from old inherited superstition, but, on the contrary, the strictest, most orthodox acceptance of the Bible was his ideal. He opposed the pope only when, by his frivolities, he offended his most orthodox faith.

Of his own free will, Luther never opposed the pope. His independent actions began and ended with the publication of those ninety-five theses against indulgences. Even long afterwards he wrote the humblest letters to the offended bishops and the pope. "Therefore, most holy Father," his letter to the pope closes, "I fall at the feet of your Holiness and render myself to you with all I am and have; you may let me live or die, approve or disapprove of my affair, give me right or give me wrong, as you choose. Be it as it may, I wish to say nothing but that Your Holiness' voice is the voice of Christ, speaking and acting through you."

Luther's theses, which, after all, were a model of naïvete—ninety-five in number, to prove the impropriety of this swindle—had spread like wildfire over the whole country, and henceforth it was no longer the personality of Luther which was involved, but the German nation.

The nobles welcomed the opposition to the Church as the fulfilment of their heart's greatest desire. They already saw themselves in possession of the rich monasteries and other



religious institutions, and pictured to themselves conditions similar to those that followed the revolts in Bohemia. The common people, particularly the peasants, who groaned under the burden of taxation, dreamed of the heavenly kingdom, where "milk and honey" flow. So, all at once, Luther became the most popular man as well as the most hated one in the world.

But in all this you must always bear in mind that it was not the person of Luther that was to the fore, but that it was the conflict between two great principles, for and against popery, that had been slowly developing for centuries and that now had reached its climax. Had Luther died at that moment, these things would have taken their course just the same. He was not the leading factor of this great event, but only a product of it.

After the flames had once been kindled, Luther could not retreat. The bridge was burned behind him. Through circumstances he was forced to play a role for which, at the time, he had not the remotest inclination. He was anything but a hero striving to reach a certain goal, whom it was impossible to turn from his purpose and who forged ahead, unafraid. In composing the theses, he had nothing but the abuses of indulgences in mind, which he thought existed unbeknown or against the will of the pope and the high bishops. Nothing was further from his mind than the intention to attack in any way his holiness, the pope. But when in consequence of his having come forward, he saw himself assailed on all sides, he naturally had to defend himself. His position was, therefore, a defensive one, not that of a storming hero. He repeatedly declared himself willing to remain silent, if only his enemies would also keep quiet and leave him in peace. Had this been done, Martin Luther would have been forgotten and buried. But just on account of his very timid appearance, his opponents expected to have an easy job with him, and forced him to extremes. But in doing so, they overlooked the fact that they were not acting against the personality of Luther, but against a whole nation; that only a spark was needed to make the powder magazine explode. The most abusive

things were written against him, he was accused of the worst heresy, and it was finally attempted to make him recant.

On the other hand, the desire to shake off the yoke of the Church arose to a pitch of exaltation. The more violent the attacks made on Luther by the papal party, the greater grew the people's enthusiasm for him. But this was not for the person of Luther, but for the cause with which he had been forced to identify himself, without his will or knowledge. Henceforth, there could be no question of turning back. He now had made enemies of the pope and the high priesthood. On the other hand, he was worshiped as a hero by all ranks of the population, by the nobles as well as the peasants. Besides this, the elector of Saxony, in genuine religious conviction, offered him his personal protection. Therefore, so long as he remained firm, he had nothing to fear in the electorate of Saxony. But if he had recanted, he would have made enemies of his friends, without reconciling his enemies.

When the pope most foolishly pronounced his excommunication, he had absolutely no choice left. The burning of the bull of excommunication, which was admired by the people as the most wonderful heroism, was the only thing he could do under the circumstances. A reconciliation with the pope was no longer to be thought of, and so the only thing of importance left for him was to make as many friends as possible among the opponents of the pope. He was remarkably successful in this, for in his ability to make each of the conflicting parties believe that he was in full sympathy with it, lay the reason for his great personal success. In his pamphlet "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, on the Reformation of the Priesthood," he asks the nation to shake off the Roman yoke, to spurn the influence hitherto exercised on the German Church by the pope, and to add no more to the profits reaped therefrom by him; to allow priests to marry and to do away with the orders of mendicant friars. The pamphlet which appeared soon after this, "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," contained all those principles which Wycliffe and

Huss had formulated before him, and which had already been recognized everywhere, even though one did not dare to express them openly.

Before he himself knew it, Luther had become an agitator; not of his own free will, but through the force of circumstances. Like a tiny ship on the billows of the ocean, he was carried away by the roaring flood of events. Thus it happened that in the year 1519 he forswore what had been sacred to him in 1518. The nobles, who could hardly disguise their greed for the property of the Church, publicly offered Luther their protection. Franz von Sickingen, Ulrich von Hutten, and Sylvester von Schaumburg, three of the most influential knights of the empire, wrote him encouraging letters, and invited him, in case he did not feel safe in Wittenberg, to come to their castles, where a hundred knights were ready to protect him. Of course, this was not intended for Luther, the man, but for the cause which he represented, but which had quite a different meaning for the nobles than for him.

Just as the nobles cast covetous glances at the Church properties, so the citizens and peasants longed for liberty and release from the insupportable oppression put upon them from all sides. Luther directed his words to them, too, and proclaimed to them the liberty of the "gospel," from which they promised themselves great things.

Such was the state of affairs when, in the year 1520, Luther was asked to appear before the Diet of Worms. The great struggle with Rome had begun, and Luther was the trade-mark of the anti-papal party. All ranks of the population were filled with the lust for battle. They all had different interests at stake, but all believed that in Luther they had found the representative of their wishes.

His journey to Worms resembled a triumphal procession. Everywhere the people flocked to see the brave man, who had dared to attack the papal crown. A solemn reception was prepared for him at Erfurt. The rector of the University and forty citizens went two miles on horseback to meet him. Wherever he appeared he was met by the re-

joicings of the people and worshiped as though he were one of the greatest of heroes.

This popularity could not possibly have been aroused by Luther, the man, for, until this time, he had not even had an opportunity to accomplish anything. The publication of his theses and those few pamphlets, which contained nothing new, could certainly not have made him a hero. Therefore, what aroused the enthusiasm of the people was, besides the cause in question, the expectation and confidence which they had in his future achievements. He was, consequently, in the peculiar position of being worshiped and celebrated, not for the deeds of heroism already performed by him, but for those expected of him.

Vanity is a component part of the normal human mind. One person has more of it, another less. Luther had been richly endowed by Nature with this quality. In his later years it became much more noticeable. He suffered no other Gods besides himself. The stormy ovations at the beginning of his public career must have made a tremendous impression on him. It must have had an intoxicating influence on the simple monk who had done nothing but modestly criticise the scandalous trade in indulgences, to find himself suddenly celebrated as the greatest hero.

What concerned him most for the present, was the question whether he would be able to live up to the expectations which he had aroused among the people. Was he able to carry out the role of hero that fate had thrust upon him? The first thing he did was to adopt the manner of speech of a "hero." When he was told that there were a great many cardinals and bishops in Worms, and that perhaps he would meet the same fate that Huss had suffered, he answered: "If they built a fire between Wittenberg and Worms reaching up to the sky, I would still appear in the name of the Lord and would step into the mouth of the dragon between his big teeth, to profess Jesus Christ and his heavenly kingdom."

This certainly sounds very heroic and must have greatly impressed the people. But could Luther have acted differently? Could he now run away after the role of hero had

been imposed on him? Could he now have declined to go to Worms? In such a case he would have had to fear far more from his "friends" than from his enemies. Consequently, it was, after all, the best he could do, to "step into the mouth of the dragon between his big teeth." Luther showed no lack of heroic phrases. On another occasion he said: "If there were as many devils in Worms as there are shingles on the roofs, I would still go there." This really sounds heroic, particularly when he had no choice to go or not to go.

Thus Luther made his entry into Worms. In an open carriage, surrounded by a great crowd of people, he entered through the gate. Before him rode the emperor's herald in uniform, bearing the crest of the eagle. Justus Jonas with his attendant, and about two thousand persons, followed the carriage. The streets were so crowded that many who wished to get a glimpse of him had to climb on to the roofs. The rejoicings of the masses of people greeted him on all sides. In the same apartment with him stopped the marshal of the empire, Ulrich von Pappenheim, and the two Saxon knights, Frederick von Thunau and Philip von Feilitsch. The imperial marshal, von Pappenheim, informed him that he was to appear at four o'clock in the afternoon of the following day, at the assembly of the imperial states.

At this moment the eyes of the whole world were fixed on Luther, for the cause in question was the most sacred and important which at that time occupied the world. Every gaze was fixed on the hero, who seemed sent from heaven to deliver the people of God from the "Babylonian bondage." The moment when the hero would burst the chains borne so long by the poor, oppressed people, was anticipated with the greatest suspense.

That our hero spent a sleepless night can not astonish us. That he spent it "in watching the starry heavens and in playing the lute" must have had a particular reason. Luther's orthodox religious faith has already been pointed out. He undoubtedly believed in the literal existence of a heavenly kingdom, on the throne of which Christ sat, sur-

rounded by his Apostles, as it is described in the Gospel. Why, on this important night, should the heavens not open and show themselves to him in all their splendor? Why should not Christ reveal himself to his disciple as he had done to Paul? Was it not God's duty to enlighten and assist him at this moment? For was it not in God's cause he appeared here, and for which he declared himself ready to give his life?

Could thoughts other than these have occupied Luther, when he spent that night in "observing the starry heavens"? For any one in doubt about this, we will here quote a part of the prayer sent during that night to heaven, which he wrote down with his own hand. "O God! O thou my God! Stand by me against all the intelligence and wisdom of this world, do thou this. Thou must do it, thou alone! For it is not my affair, but thine! I have nothing to do for my own sake, with these great lords of the world. I would prefer to spend my days in peace and be undisturbed. But the affair is thine, O Lord, who art just and eternal. Stand by me, thou true, eternal God! I rely on no human being. It is in vain and for nothing; everything halts that is flesh and tastes flesh. Oh, God! oh, God! Dost thou not hear? Art thou dead? No, thou canst not die, thou only hidest thyself. Hast thou not chosen me, I ask thee, though I know it for a certainty. So God willed it, for in all my life, I never dreamed of opposing such great lords. And never intended to do so. Oh, God! Stand by me in the name of the beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who shall be my protector and my shield, my fortress, by the strength and power of thy Holy Ghost. Lord, where tarriest thou? Thou, my God, where art thou? Come, come, I am ready to give my life for it, patient as a little lamb. For the affair is just and thine, and I do not wish to separate from thee forever. This be resolved in thy name. The world must leave my conscience free. And if the world were filled with devils, and if my body, which above all is thy work and creation, perish, or even be shattered in ruins, your word is law to me, and only my body would be in question. The soul is thine

and belongs to thee, and will remain with thee forever, amen. God help me! Amen!"

Sunk in such prayers, the great hero sat "like a little lamb" and cried: "But come, God! Dost thou not hear? Art thou dead?" After he had spent the entire night in this manner, at last the day appeared, to which the whole nation had looked forward with the keenest anticipation.

Luther received proofs of sympathy from all sides. Even in the assembly hall several of the high dignitaries gave him tokens of their approval. There are said to have been more than five thousand persons in the hall and ante-chambers. The gathering which awaited him was brilliant and numerous. Besides the emperor and his brother, the Archduke Ferdinand, there were present six ecclesiastical and secular electors, twenty-four dukes, eight margraves, thirty bishops and prelates, besides many other princes, counts, nobles, and ambassadors.

When Luther appeared before the emperor and the representatives of the various states, two questions were put to him in the name of the emperor by the Kurtrier official: First, whether he recognized the books laid before him as his, and, second, whether he were willing to recant everything contained in them?

What, do you think, did the exalted convention in the hall and the masses of the people, who waited expectantly outside, as well as the whole world, whose eyes were fixed on our hero, expect the answer to the latter question to be? The question whether he would recant everything on account of which he was being worshiped as the greatest hero, on account of which the people had met him with rejoicing, on account of which the most influential knights of the country had offered him their protection, this question—how, do you think, everybody expected Luther to answer it? That great hero who had come to Worms to fight for his conviction, "even though as many devils were there as shingles on the roofs!" How do you suppose it was confidently expected that this great hero would act upon this question?

Is it too great a stretch of our imagination to picture that great hero, as, with scornfully wrinkled brow, he listens to

that question and like a pistol-shot hurls a thundering "No" as his answer? "No," we hear him cry, "never in my life! Not one iota will I retract of all that is written there. I wrote it from the depth of my heart and never shall I go back on my own conviction."

We ask again, is it too great a stretch of imagination to picture our hero like this? Hardly! How could the hero have spoken or acted differently? Can you imagine for a moment that he hesitated a single instant in giving this answer? Very well! The curtain may rise and show our hero in his true light at the most important moment of the history of the world.

"Most submissively and humbly," Luther begs a "respite"; "so that he may without prejudice to the word of God and without danger to his soul's salvation, answer correctly the questions put to him." Pale and trembling, the great hero stood before the convention, begging for time to consider whether he should retract what he had written against the trade in indulgences. The same man on whom honors had been showered as if he were the "returning Messiah himself," begged for time, to consider whether he should retract everything for which the world had thus honored him. This sounds almost incredible. And still, the "hero" made such a pitiful impression on the convention that the emperor said to his neighbor, "This fellow could never induce me to become a heretic."

How differently had the brave Huss borne himself before the council at Constance? He asked for no respite. From the first moment to the last, he declared freely and openly that he would never retract a single word of what he had taught. Huss knew that if he did not recant, he would be burned to death at the stake. He was surrounded by enemies who ascribed to him things he had never said. He had not a single friend in the great assembly; not a voice was raised in his behalf. How different was Luther's position! He, on the contrary, was surrounded by numerous and powerful friends. Behind him stood the bold knights who would not let a hair of his head be touched. The elector of Saxony had placed him under his personal



protection. All these—not to speak of the great throng of people—were his friends so long as he remained firm. He had far more to lose by retraction than by adhering to his cause. And yet—pale and trembling—he begged for a respite.

The imperial official very correctly remarked that Luther had certainly had enough time to consider the reason for his summons to appear there, and he had no right to ask for permission to postpone his answer. Nevertheless, he was granted another day for consideration, and was ordered to reappear before the assembly on the following day.

We have no accurate reports of what took place during those twenty-four hours. If, however, you place yourself in the position of the interested parties, you will undoubtedly realize that Luther's vacillation must have created a general consternation among those who had been, until then, his admirers. It is quite evident that the nobles not only openly expressed their displeasure against Luther, but that the former promises of support and protection on their part were now turned into threats in case he became a traitor to the "good cause." As has been stated, we have no direct reports on the matter, but it is hardly credible that it should have been otherwise.

On the following day he appeared before the assembly, where he made a long speech in which he tried to justify his conduct, until finally the Trier official interrupted him by saying that he was not speaking to the point. They were not here to dispute with him but demanded of him a concise and pertinent answer to the question, whether he would recant or not. When he was, therefore, so to say, held up at the mouth of a pistol, he at last condescended to declare that he would not recant, but added the usually misinterpreted words: "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen!" These words describe the position in which he found himself. He could indeed not possibly do otherwise. To recant here, was an absolute impossibility for him. A recantation would have turned him from the most celebrated hero into the most despised individual on earth. The people and nobles would never have forgiven

him, his personal safety would have been seriously endangered. It therefore required no great courage for him to refuse to retract. When, later on, he nevertheless boasted of his heroism at Worms, Muenzer derided him with the words: "One could easily fall asleep over your idiotic folly in boasting that you stood before the assembly of the empire in Worms, thanks to the German nobles whose mouths you have besmeared and filled with honey; for they firmly believed that with your sermons you would make Bohemian presents, monasteries, and bishoprics, which you now promise to the princes. Had you wavered at Worms, you would sooner have been stabbed by the nobles than have been permitted to go free, as everybody knows."

The nobles, who coveted the church properties, were almost entirely on Luther's side. Of the princes, there were a few who were inimical to him. Duke George of Saxony remained unshakably loyal to the pope. The two Hohen-zollern were the most strenuously opposed to Luther. With them it was a mere matter of business. The Archbishop of Mainz had undertaken the whole trade in indulgences for Germany. It is said he kept half the income therefrom for himself. The elector of Brandenburg was indirectly interested in it, and consequently became also a zealous defender of the pope. But the pope found his main support against all attacks in Germany in the person of the emperor.

After the death of Maximilian I., the three greatest monarchs of Europe competed for the imperial throne of Germany; that is, the kings of France, Spain, and England. The pope was antagonistic to Charles and favored the election of Francis I. of France, because he feared to see a king of Naples ascend the German imperial throne. When Charles, nevertheless, did become emperor, it must have been a matter of considerable importance to him to be on friendly terms with the pope. He saw, in advance, that he would have to fight many battles with his rival, Francis I. Besides the personal jealousy existing between the two monarchs, their conflicting interests in Milan, Naples, Navarre, and Burgundy were by no means adjusted, and it was only

a question of time when the war between them would break out.

In the East, Charles was severely pressed by the Turks, and had to think of inducing the pope to authorize a general crusade against the infidels. How correctly Charles had judged the king of France was shown later, when the "most Christian king" took sides with the Turks to fight against his hated rival, the emperor of Germany.

Charles V., therefore, tried in every way to show himself obliging to the pope. This, however, was a rather difficult task at this particular time in Germany, the entire nation seeming to declare itself against the pope. After Luther had burned the papal bull of excommunication, Charles was urged by the pope to lend legal authority to the bull of excommunication by a general edict. But against this the nobles and the people had protested. Charles had to be particularly considerate of Frederick, the elector of Saxony. It was he who held the purse-strings. Saxony was at that time, because of its mines, the richest country in Germany. Frederick had been the only one who had taken no money at the election of the emperor. He did not need it. The imperial throne had even been offered to him. But he refused it. He knew it would not be worth the price, and instead of accepting it for himself, supported the election of Charles.

Instead of proceeding against Luther, Charles was forced to consent to have him come to Worms, to defend himself at the Diet. This was something unheard of, something that had never happened before. A monk, excommunicated by the pope, was to defend himself at a meeting of the Diet, before the emperor and the imperial states! This step contained a direct insult to the papal authority. And in what form was this invitation issued? The "honorable, dear, reverent Martin Luther, of the Augustian Order" was asked to come to Worms. Such was the attitude of the people in Germany that the emperor was forced to act in this way toward a monk excommunicated by the pope.

But when, worst of all, Luther had declined at Worms to recant the articles he had written, the emperor found

himself confronted with a serious dilemma. To make an enemy of the pope would, from the standpoint of a statesman, have been a great mistake. But the pope could never forgive the emperor if he still continued to remain quiescent towards Luther. But, on the other hand, Charles realized that he could do nothing "against Luther" without antagonizing the whole country. This was certainly a difficult situation. Everything was tried to make Luther recant. The most comprehensive concessions were offered to bring about a compromise. But Luther could not now turn back. A friendly reconciliation of the parties was no longer among the possibilities.

Many of the advisers of the emperor, friendly to the pope, urged him to follow the example of his imperial predecessor, Sigismund, and to refuse Luther the safe-conduct he had promised him for his return trip. Cardinal Adrian, a former teacher of Charles, and with him all the assembled grandees of Tordesillas, requested him urgently, through the execution of ecclesiastical law against the most obstinate heretic, to demonstrate to the world that he was the foe of the "enemies of Christ." Also the king of England, Henry VIII., who afterwards became the founder of the Reformation in England, advised that Luther, with all his writings, be burned. And in Germany, too, there were many voices besides those of the ecclesiastical gentlemen that advised the emperor to break his word of honor. Above all others, the Hohenzollern elector of Brandenburg insisted on this honorable step.

The emperor found himself in the most difficult situation. The long-planned agreement between him and the pope against the king of France had just been completed and was shortly to be ratified by a formal treaty. Charles had pledged himself to protect the Catholic faith, and at this politically important moment he dared not offend the pope.

On the other hand, in Germany his hands were tied regarding Luther. The knighthood stood with hands on their swords, ready to draw them if a hair of Luther's head were harmed. The nobility had become too much taken up with

the thought that they were about to enjoy possession of the church properties to be turned down at this moment. The people who had been promised the liberty and equality set forth in the Gospel, were not to be robbed of their ideal.

Charles V. was, regarding his mental abilities, one of the most prominent German emperors. He had an unusually keen mind, and was unquestionably the greatest statesman of his time. A man like him could not commit such an awkward diplomatic mistake as to have Luther put to death. He clearly foresaw the consequences which were bound to follow such a step. With his keen intelligence, he realized that Luther dead was far more to be feared than Luther alive. The stake at which Luther perished would have lit a torch that would have set all Europe in flames. Luther's death-sentence would have been the trumpet of war, resounding from one end of the country to the other. Charles was far too great a statesman to overlook this. The advice to break his promise and to deny him the free-conduct, could be given by an uncouth fellow like the elector of Brandenburg. The king of England, and the king of Spain, in their circumstances, had nothing to lose in case of a German civil war. But a man like Charles could not commit such an error.

The manner in which Charles got out of this difficult dilemma is a genuine work of art in the domain of diplomacy. Today there can hardly be a doubt that the emperor not only knew of the "plot" against Luther, but that the whole affair was the product of his fine mind. No one but he would have been able to find so genial a solution of such a difficult problem.

The emperor, for the time being, protected Luther by repudiating with indignation the suggestion to break his word, saying, "I do not care to blush like my predecessor, Sigismund. What one promises, one must keep." Then he had the imperial states appear before him to acquaint them with the farewell he himself had composed, and with which he intended to dismiss Luther. In it he says, "Luther shall not be heard further, but shall at once be escorted to his home and be treated like a heretic. For the successor of the

Christian emperors and the Catholic kings of Spain, whose honest duty it was to protect the old faith and to maintain the authority of the decisions of the councils, as well as for the German princes, it would have been an eternal shame if heresy, or even the appearance of an error, dwelt in their hearts. Therefore he was willing to stake body and life, his very soul, to suppress the godless actions of a real, convicted heretic. But they might decide what was proper for good Christians, and do what they had promised to do."

A copy of this document was at once sent to the Curia in Rome, and Léo expressed his thanks for it in a laudatory brief. Luther was sent home under "safe-conduct," "overpowered" on the way and taken secretly to the Wartburg. After being safely conveyed there, and no one but the few initiated knowing of his whereabouts, the great bomb against him was exploded into the air. Aleander, the papal legate, himself composed the mandate against him. But the publication of the same was held back until the Electors of Saxony and Palatinate had left the city. Only then, about four weeks after Luther's departure, Aleander at the command of the emperor, read the edict. He mentioned the false doctrines and defamations which Martin Luther, in whose person the evil spirit had taken the form of a human being in the capote of a monk, published against the Catholic Church; he remarked that, all friendly measures having been exhausted, the emperor, as representative and protector of the true Catholic faith, was in duty bound to interfere, and in conclusion pronounced the excommunication against Luther and his friends and followers. His books were to be burned.

This was done on the 25th of May. But Aleander dated the official document from the 8th of May, so that it might be believed that the proscription was issued with the "unanimous advice and will" of the States. When, on the following day, Aleander placed the document before the emperor, Charles smilingly signed it, saying: "Now you will be satisfied with me." A further proclamation ordered all the authorities to execute the edict, under penalty of the severest punishment.

Can there be the slightest doubt that this whole comedy was prearranged by the emperor himself? The proscription was issued literally, not only against Luther himself, but against "all his well-wishers and followers." But his chief patron was Frederick, the Wise, Elector of Saxony. The most powerful knights of the country had openly offered him their protection. The great majority of the people were his "followers." And the excommunication was to be in good faith against all these? The very fact that the publication of the edict was postponed not only until Luther was in safety, but until the Elector of Saxony and other "patrons" had left the city, shows plainly enough that the whole affair was a well-studied comedy.

Luther was now comfortably located in the Wartburg and spent his time in translating the Bible and composing other articles, while out in the world the waves of battle roared. In these battles, "the dear, blessed man of God" played the most infamous role. For Luther invariably emerged victorious from any and all of the conflicts. Not by belonging to the party that carried off the victory, but because he always, after the battle was fought, went over to the side of the victors. He never hesitated then to pose as the victor and to claim for himself all the honors and tributes of respect which victory brings in its train. His glory was not diminished because by his inflammatory words he had inspired the other party before the fight; on the contrary, he knew how to make himself popular on all sides. Therein lay Luther's great art, that he always knew how to keep on good terms with both parties, making each of them believe that he belonged to it, body and soul, and then, in the deciding moment, placing himself on the side of the winner.

The nobles were the most impatient of all parties at that time. The knights were like lions who had tasted blood. They burned with desire to take possession of the church properties and were longing for the final crisis. They did not wish to bother about theological subtleties. What did a man like Franz von Sickingen care whether he received the sacrament in "one" or "both forms"? So far as he was

concerned, it could have had half a dozen forms. What mattered to him were not the sacrament, the images, the marriage of priests, confession, and such like, but rather the wealthy bishoprics, monasteries, etc. His desires were for even greater things; he would have liked to become Elector of Trier.

Franz von Sickingen was the most powerful German knight of his time. He carried on the well-known brigandage of the knights on a wholesale scale. He was not satisfied, like his knightly colleagues, with attacking traveling merchants and robbing them of everything they had, but had plundered whole cities like Worms and Metz. Nevertheless, he firmly insisted on his so-called knightly honor. This consisted in sending a formal challenge to the person or the commonwealth he intended to rob. When this formality had been sufficiently complied with, every kind of robbery and murder was permissible. Of course, the challenge had to have some reason, no matter how far-fetched it might be. Thus, for example, he began his private warfare against the city of Worms in favor of an exiled citizen, Balthasar Schloer, whom he employed as secretary. How great must the love of the "noble" knight for Mr. Balthasar Schloer have been to cause him to make war on a whole city in his behalf! A comparatively plausible excuse to send a challenge to wealthy people, was, therefore, always very welcome to those valiant knights. With what enthusiasm, in view of all this, must the whole knighthood have turned to the new church-doctrine, which certainly was of no importance to them except to give them an excuse for turning out all the wealthy bishops and occupants of monasteries and taking possession of their property. If historians of today continue to tell how "a mighty current of enthusiasm for the Gospel was wafted over the German countries," they either intentionally distort the facts or manifest an incredible ignorance. Franz von Sickingen bothered himself as much about the Gospel as about the North pole. After all, what was there in the whole Reformation that could have inspired enthusiasm in the German knighthood? Can any one really be naïve enough to believe



that these knights, who lived on robbery and by killing their fellowmen, were ready to shed their last drop of blood in order that a German peasant woman might henceforth pray to the Lord "Jesus Christ" instead of to "Mother Mary"? Or that henceforth the laymen would get something to drink as well as to eat with the sacrament? Or that the village chaplain could marry and have children? Or that the priest should wear a black coat instead of an embroidered robe? For such things the knights were to be enthusiastic? How ridiculous! "The mighty current of enthusiasm which was wafted over the German countries" was, so far as concerned the nobility, directed to acquiring the property of the Church, and to nothing else.

Franz von Sickingen had opened his fortified castles, Landstuhl and Ehrenburg, to all those who were persecuted or hard pressed because of their enthusiasm for the new doctrine, as an asylum, as "a harbor of righteousness." Here, consequently, the "advocates of truth," the preachers of the Gospel met. Here Caspar Aquila, John Oecolampad, Martin Bucer, John Schwebel and Otto Brunfels made their headquarters for the propagation of the new doctrine. Now the union, as whose head were Franz von Sickingen and Ulrich von Hutten, had an excellent excuse to chase the bishops and take possession of the monasteries. Franz von Sickingen could send a challenge to the Archbishop and Elector of Trier, not only without injuring his knightly honor, but by such action become the champion of liberty—and the defender of the Gospel. In his proclamation to the troops and allies he declared that "the purpose of the undertaking was not the accumulation of property and power, but the honor of God, inasmuch as the fight was directed against the enemies of the Gospel, the bishops and priests."

The union of the nobility was directed not only against the Church, but also against the princes, by whom the knighthood found itself severely aggrieved. In his speech entitled "The Robbers," Franz von Sickingen had openly spoken of the grievances of the nobles. He complained particularly of the "scribes and jurists." "By them the nobles were being more and more excluded from the councils

and courts of the princes; through them a great many estates, which the nobles considered their own property, were declared a feoff of the princes; they were the devastating pest of the inherited estates of the nobility. The old liberty in the empire, with the emperor at its head, the knights at his side, was therefore demanded. The power of the princes, with its courts, taxes, and feudal institutions, was to be overthrown, a free, self-governing imperial knighthood, as the guardian of the laws and rights of the emperor and his subjects was to be instituted, the doctrines of the new Church were to be carried out, and the sovereign authority of the bishops was to be abolished."

It was, therefore, a struggle of the union of the knights against the power of the princes and the Roman Church. The object of the struggle was to give back to the knights the old rights due to their position, to gain possession of the Church estates, and to rid themselves of the Roman yoke and the abuses connected therewith. The pretense of the German knights for raising their banner was the new doctrine of the Church, with the demands already set forth by Wycliffe.

Had this struggle ended in favor of the knighthood, had Franz von Sickingen succeeded in expelling the Archbishop of Trier and putting the Elector's hat on his own head, the Protestant world would have celebrated this union of knights as the liberators of their country and the valiant pioneers of the Reformation. Franz von Sickingen would have been worshiped as a heaven-sent knight, as the defender and proclaimer of the Gospel. But as the real head of the "Reform" movement, Martin Luther would have stepped into the foreground. He would have been greatly pleased at being praised as the victor in this struggle. He would have been considered the head of this great union, and Franz von Sickingen its arm.

But it was not so to be. The knights were not victorious. With an army of five thousand infantry and fifteen hundred cavalry, Sickingen came before the walls of Trier. Already it was said that "he would soon be elector or even more than that." But his bold plan was

shattered by the gallant resistance set up by the Archbishop. To this was added the circumstance that the auxiliary troops which he had gathered at Cologne, Kleve, Braunschweig, and other places were prevented by the sovereigns of the states in question from coming to his assistance. For, in spite of the differences of opinion among themselves, the princes were all agreed that the knighthood should not be allowed to get the upper hand in the Empire. Thus Sickingen was compelled to retire and to lock himself up in his castle, Landstuhl.

The strength of the union was thus broken. One member after the other was conquered by the united forces of the princes, and finally Sickingen's turn came too. In defending his castle, he was fatally wounded by a bullet, and with his death the revolt of the nobility against the princes and the Church came to an end.

And how did Martin Luther act in the face of this defeat? Was he and his cause conquered thereby? No, by no means! Luther's greatness lay in the very fact that he always understood how to place himself at the right moment on the side of the victorious party and quietly allow the laurel wreath of victory to be put upon his brow, even when the party he had encouraged to fight was beaten. Luther and his friend Melancthon now outdid themselves in decrying the violent steps taken by the nobility. Only with words, not with the sword, should one fight for the gospel. They accused Sickingen of having a "fractious spirit," and Hutten of "insanity," and Luther denied all responsibility for this revolt of the nobility, at the bottom of which he had been until its disastrous issue.

But how did such talk agree with the stand Luther had taken before the struggle? In the before-mentioned "circular to the Christian nobles of the German nation," he preached nothing but revolution. And not a revolution with "words," but with the "force of arms," at that. "If the ravings," he says, "of the Romanists continue like this, it seems to me that no remedy remains but that the emperor, the kings, and princes, by force of arms, prepare to attack this pest of the world, and bring this matter to a

decision, no longer with words, but with iron. If we punish thieves with rope, murderers with the sword, and heretics with the fagot, why do we not attack with all weapons these pernicious teachers, these cardinals, these popes, and the whole ulcer of the Roman Sodom, who destroy the Church of God, and wash our hands in their blood?"

Is this the language of a man who condemns all violence and wants to spread the gospel "only with words"? Can stronger words be used to instigate to revolt than the openly expressed desire to wash his hands in the blood of his enemies? Here he openly asks the emperor, the kings and princes, "to fortify themselves with the force of arms," to attack the "pestilence," "no longer with words, but with iron." Thus he speaks when defending his own cause. But if the emperor should have to take up arms for the opposite party, the "dear man of God" openly instigates the people to disobedience to their emperor, to high treason. In his article: "Warnings of Martin Luther to his beloved Germans," he says: "But this is my sincere advice, that if the emperor takes the side of the pope against us in this affair and would wish to make war because of the pope's cause and against our doctrine, of which the papists now boast, that in such a case no person shall feel himself obliged to give obedience to the emperor, but shall be assured that he has been sternly forbidden by God to obey the emperor in such a case. Whoever obeys him, he shall know that he is disobedient to God, and that his body and soul will be eternally lost to him."

Does it seem possible that today, in the German Empire, a man is honored as the greatest hero of the German nation and the founder of a new religion, who openly instigated the people to disobedience against their emperor, to high treason, and who justified this contemptible act by the very religion which he proclaimed?

So long as Luther believed himself in safety and had no fear for his person, he developed tremendous courage against every one who acted contrary to his will and wishes. He called the Duke of Saxony nothing but "the Dresden

pig." "If the princes continue," he writes, "to listen to the promptings of the stupid brain of Duke George, I am sorely afraid that a revolution is in store for us, a revolution which will destroy the princes and magistrates in all of Germany, and at the same time involve all the clergy."

Luther owed his great popularity among the people exclusively to his unlimited abuse of the princes. In his article: "On the Worldly Authority, and how far Obedience is Its Due," he says: "The Almighty God has made our princes crazy, so that they believe they can do and order their subordinates to do anything they choose. They do nothing but pinch and harass one tax after the other, exact one tribute after another." He attacks not only the princes of his time, but all of them, from the beginning of the world. A clever prince had always been "a rare bird," a pious one, even more so. "They are all the greatest fools and the worst rascals on earth. Their tyranny and wantonness shall not, can not, will not, longer be endured."

The emperor's campaigns cost money, and he did his utmost to extract as much as possible from the princes. The princes needed money to pay their soldiers and officials; they had used enormous sums to subdue the insurrectionary nobles and draw them back to their courts; they needed money to bribe the tools of their opponents. The nobles were defeated in their undertaking against the Church and the princes, and had to try and heal the wounds and find compensation for the long desired church property still withheld from them. The Church, after the failure of the enterprise of the nobles, began anew its work of spoliation and robbery of the people.

How the poor peasants must have suffered under such conditions! Their taxes had been enormously increased. They were forced to the severest compulsory service, and were treated with the greatest cruelty. Whatever promised to allay their sufferings in the least was therefore welcomed with the most intense zeal. At the time when Luther opposed the trade in indulgences, he was revered as a hero and redeemer. When, later on, he was excommunicated for doing so, all the peasants became furiously indignant. This

sentiment was aggravated by a lot of popular pamphlets which were circulated throughout the country. Many of them were decorated with characteristic woodcuts, in which the vices of the priests and the crimes committed by the Church were illustrated, so that even the peasantry who did not know how to read, could take notice of them. At that time Luther wrote that the "Gospel was not to be defended with violence and bloodshed, but by the Word." And he certainly now uses this "Word" with a fury which one is scarce accustomed to hear from the greatest demagogues. Among other things, he wrote: "Whoever is and desires to be a pious Christian, shall spit out the name of the pope whenever he hears it spoken, or reads or even thinks it."

As has been mentioned, Luther's writings contain a direct challenge to acts of violence, though he always pretends to speak against them. He constantly speaks of "the Christian war" which the nation "had to fight." The time for this had come. He implores God to give him one of the trumpets wherewith the walls of Jericho had once been thrown down, "so that we may blow down these walls of straw and paper, too." "All Christians are true priests, and there is no difference between them except that of ecclesiastical office alone, for we are all one body, of which every member has its own work by which it serves the others. That is because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are equal Christians." Could such words fail to instigate the oppressed people to revolt? For what purpose were they intended, except to incite the people to a revolution against their oppressors?

One pamphlet followed another. The excitement of the people grew from day to day. Through traveling preachers, actors, caricatures, and posters the peasants and workmen were incited against the Pope. In every saloon, in public meeting places, and in the homes of the people, articles and circulars were read, and agitative speeches made. "No publisher," Erasmus wrote to King Henry VIII. of England, "dares to print a word against Luther, but any one can write what he pleases against the pope." In the country, the lower priests were, as a rule, nearly all

on the side of the people, for the country parsons and the monks felt themselves far more akin to the peasants than to the great prelates.

The flame that was in this way kindled among the people naturally could not remain confined to the Church alone. Especially not to the things which Luther had in mind. The peasants could not satisfy their hunger with the sacrament in both forms. They cared just as little about the mass, confession, and all other clerical rites. They wanted to live decent lives, instead of being treated like dogs. They were not incensed against the clerical institutions, but against their oppressors; whether these were priests or secular lords mattered little.

Consequently, the peasants revolted in different places at the same time, and the little bands gradually grew to presentable armies, with regular leaders at their head. The Swabian League put in the field against them a well-drilled army under the leadership of George Truchsess von Valdburg, famous for his cruelty. Although he destroyed a number of bands, he could not, however, subdue the peasants, because of their greater number, and therefore signed a treaty with them in consequence of which a committee of arbitration was to be appointed by both sides, to decide their differences.

The peasants had set up those well-known twelve articles in which they gave expression to their complaints. There was nothing in them that we, from a humane standpoint, would not consider just and right to-day. They asked Luther of their own accord to express his opinion about these articles. Following are the essential points of the articles, and Luther's criticism of them:

1. The peasants want henceforth to elect their own parson.

This was feasible, according to Luther, only if the congregation and not the authorities would pay the parson.

2. They declare themselves "willing to pay the tenth" hereafter as before. "But only as is seemly." They wanted to pay their parson out of this, and, with what remained, support the poor.

To this Luther says: "This article is sheer robbery and lurking thievery, for here they want to grasp for themselves the tenth which is not theirs, but belongs to the government, and do with it as they please. If you wish to give to public charity and do good, give of what belongs to you."

3. The peasants do not wish to be serfs, but freemen, "since Christ redeemed and freed all by his dearly shed blood. For this reason the Gospel says that they are free." But they expressly stated that by "free" they did not mean "lawless." They wanted a government to rule them, and "expected to grant it obedience in all seemly and Christian matters."

On this Luther remarks: "That is making Christian freedom entirely bodily. Did not Abraham and other Patriarchs and Prophets have slaves?" Read what St. Paul teaches you of the servants who at his time were serfs. Therefore this article is directly opposed to the Gospel, and robbery, since by it every one tries to take his body from his master, whose property it is. For a serf can be a Christian and have Christian liberty just as well as a prisoner or invalid can be a Christian and still not be free. This article intends to make all men equals, and of the spiritual kingdom of Christ make a worldly, external, kingdom; which is impossible."

Several articles deal with the permission to fish, to supply themselves with wood, and demands for similar rights which had heretofore been denied the peasants. They complain about arbitrary and cruel punishments inflicted on them and of the "unattainable" taxes.

In the eleventh article we find: "We want to abolish absolutely the custom called 'in case of death,' that in opposition to God and honor shamefully takes from widows and orphans what belongs to them, 'as is done in many places and in various forms.'"

In regard to those articles concerning rights of property and wages Luther refers the peasants to the jurists. His commendatory on the third article, in which he tries to prove the justification of slavery by the Bible, is as



characteristic of Luther's ideas as of the fact that by the Bible, particularly the "Gospel," anything on earth can be proven.

Simultaneously with this altogether barbarous criticism of the twelve articles, Luther sent a letter to the nobility and another to the peasants, in which he soundly berates both parties, naïvely supposing that all difficulties have been satisfactorily disposed of by his "warning." Luther was not insane, he was not a paranoiac and had no delusions in the psychiatric meaning of the word. But his overwhelming arrogance and conceit might easily impress the laity as delusions of grandeur. He puts himself above all parties, from the emperor and pope to the lowest beggar, and tells every one what is proper for him to do. He frequently speaks of "my gospel," and is always ready to condemn every one whose opinion differs from his own.

In his letter to the nobility, he says: "We have to thank no one on earth for such mischief and rebellion but you princes and lords, particularly you blind bishops, crazy priests and monks, who today, yet impenitent, do not cease to struggle and rage against the Holy Gospel, even though ye know it is right and cannot be confuted. In your secular government you do no more than harrass and tax, to support your splendor and pride, until the poor, common man can no longer endure it. The sword is at your throat; ye still think ye sit so tight in the saddle that ye cannot be pulled down therefrom. Such security and vicious audacity will break your necks, as ye will see. . . . Ye must become different, and live in fear of God's Word. If ye do not do it willingly, freely, ye must be compelled to do so by force and hurtful ways. If these peasants do not do it, others must. And though you killed them all, God would raise up others."

Here, therefore, Luther abuses the princes and lords, because of their brutal treatment of the peasants. He gives the peasants absolute right in the matter. He threatens the nobility that if it does not reform of its own accord, it will be compelled to do so by force. God would raise up other peasants in case these were defeated.

In complete contradiction to this, he then tells the peasants that all authority is ordained by God, and that they would commit the greatest sin if they opposed their masters. It was their duty as good Christians, to suffer all injustice and leave the punishment therefor to God.

"Ye say further: Yes, our masters are too wicked and insufferable; they do not want to give us the Gospel, and oppress us too severely by withholding from us the worldly goods, thus ruining our bodies and souls. I answer: The fact that your masters are wicked and unjust, does not excuse robbery nor revolt. For to punish wickedness is not permitted to everyone, but only to the worldly authorities who carry the sword<sup>182</sup>, who, as Paul says, have been ordained by God to punish the wicked. There is the natural right in the whole world, that no one shall be his own judge, or his own avenger. For the saying is true: Who strikes back is in the wrong . . . Now ye cannot deny that your revolt is such, that you have made yourselves judges, have gone to avenge yourselves, and wish to suffer no injustice. This is not only opposed to Christian righteousness and the Gospel, but also opposed to natural right and reasonableness. For be in the right as much as you choose, no Christian has the right to avenge and fight, but must suffer injustice and endure the toil."

Luther's doctrine was well received among his personal friends. Melanchthon wrote precisely in his style. In his article, "A Refutation of the Articles of the Peasantry," he, too, takes issue against the peasants on every point. He favors serfdom and also proved its justification from the Gospels, from which everything can be proved. In regard to the "masters," he quite agrees with Luther, saying: "Thou sayest, but how if they too severely and unjustly oppress me? Answer: Even though a prince do wrong and pinch and harass you, still it is not right to create revolt. . . . Besides, the Gospel commands you to suffer injustice not only from your masters but from every one, as it is written in Matt. v., If any one strike you on the right cheek, turn to him also the left."

<sup>182</sup>Rom. xiii: 4; 1 Peter ii 14.

Furthermore, Melancthon asks the "authorities" to prosecute the peasants as "murderers and robbers" with every means at their disposal. In regard to punishment, it was rather to be made more severe than diminished, "for the German people are so insolent, mischievous and blood-thirsty that it is better to deal more severely with them."

We quote these words in their original form, because they are so characteristic of the absurdity of the religious doctrine in question. The moral, taught by Luther, says, the government of a people is instituted by God, and for this reason no people ever has the right to oppose its government, no matter how bad, how cruel, how criminal, such government may be. The people must patiently bear their fate; the right to punish belongs to God alone.

This is the religious principle by means of which humanity was held in bondage for centuries. It is the most pernicious doctrine imaginable, preventing all progress and making any development of civilization an impossibility. According to this doctrine all the insane beasts of Roman emperors like Tiberius, Caligula and Nero had been princes by the grace of God, and the people should permit such monsters to torture and massacre them at their own sweet will.

Entirely aside from the absurdity of this doctrine, Luther continually contradicts himself. When it suits him, he says: "No longer with words, but with iron," this or that of his opponents is to be fought. Then again, the people shall submit patiently to the greatest injustice, for: All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword. The authorities, he says, are ordained by the grace of God and the people must implicitly obey them. But in another place he says, that the princes are "generally the greatest fools and the worst rascals on earth. Their tyranny and harassment shall not, will not, cannot, longer be endured." What ridiculous contradictions! At one time a good Christian shall submit patiently, like a stupid sheep, to everything, and then again, "he shall not, can not and will not." What are the people to think of all these contradictions and absurdities?

Luther concludes his article with the advice to the nobles

and peasantry to come to an amicable agreement, each side making concessions. Was Luther really naïve enough to believe that he was able to solve the most difficult social problems by his abuse? That the princes and knights would change their fundamental principles because he calls them obstinate sinners, storming and raging against the Gospel? At any rate, Luther knew how to keep himself neutral between the two parties until it was decided which side was to have the victory. At the beginning of the peasant war, he acted exactly as he had done during the uprising of the nobles. Only when the victory was assured did he place himself on the side of the victor, to take for himself all the honors and marks of distinction.

Luther could not long remain in doubt as to which one of the two parties was to conquer. His peace-loving master Elector Frederick, had died, and his successor was his brother John, who was not in favor of peaceable measures. Everywhere the princes took to their arms to quell the uprising of the peasants. The undrilled, poorly armed troops could offer no lasting resistance to the well-disciplined army of the Swabian general, Truchsess von Waldburg. Landgrave Philipp von Hepen suppressed the revolts in his own country. In Franconia and Thuringia the power of the insurgents had also been broken.

While before the decisive issue of the struggle Luther had addressed the peasants as "gentlemen and brothers," they were now only "robbers, murderers and mad dogs" whom it was a duty to slaughter. While heretofore he had acknowledged the complaints of the peasants as well-founded, he now declared the "authorities" to be right. In his article "Against the Thievish and Murderous Peasants," he says: "They rob me and rage and act like mad dogs. In short, they carry on sheer devilry, particularly is it the arch-devil who reigns at Muelhausen and perpetuates nothing but robbery, murder and bloodshed. The peasants commit three kinds of deadly sins against God and man, for which they deserve to be put to death, body and soul. In the first place, that they had sworn loyalty and fealty to their masters, and pledged themselves to be subordinate and obedient to

them, as God has commanded. But because they mischievously and wickedly fail in this obedience and also set themselves in opposition to their masters, they have conducted themselves, body and soul, like faithless, perjured, lying, disobedient miscreants and scoundrels. In the next place that they instigate revolts, wickedly assault and plunder monasteries and castles not their own, and, consequently, they being bandits and murderers, doubly deserve death, body and soul; for a person who incites to revolt, if it can be proved against him, is declared an outlaw by God and the emperor and can be put to death by the first person who gets the chance to do so, doing thereby what is just and good. Therefore, let him who can, stone, strangle and stab, secretly and publicly, and remember that there can be nothing more poisonous, pernicious, devilish, than a person who incites to revolt. It is like killing a mad dog; if you do not kill him he will kill you, and a whole country with you. In the third place, they that justify such frightful, dreadful sins with the Gospel, call themselves Christian brethren, take oath and swear fealty and force people to commit such atrocities with them. In doing so they become the greatest blasphemers and defame His holy name, and therefore honor and serve the devil under the cloak of the Gospel, for which they well deserve a tenfold death of body and soul; I have never heard of more detestable sin. A prince and lord must here remember that he is the officer of God, and the servant of his wrath, and has been commanded to lift his sword against such miscreants, and that he would commit just as great a sin against God by not punishing and resisting, as when a person murders who has not been commanded to use his sword. Therefore, this is not the time to sleep. It is also not the time for patience and mercy. It is the time for the sword and for wrath and not for the pity. So then the authorities shall go ahead and with a good conscience knock down and kill so long as they have breath left in their bodies. Therefore, whoever may be killed on the side of the authorities, is a real martyr before God, before whom he may appear with a clear conscience, for he walks in the Godly word and obedience.

But whoever of the peasantry perishes, is of the eternal brood of hell, for he carries the sword against the Word of God and obedience, and is a branch of the devil. Such are these present times, that a prince can more easily attain the kingdom of heaven by bloodshed than in others by prayer. Stab, murder, strangle, whoever can! If you perish in doing so, so much the better, for you can never die a more blessed death, for you die in obeying the Divine Word and command and in the service of love to save thy neighbor from hell and the bonds of the devil."

If this is the much-vaunted Christian love and the moral of the religious doctrine of the Gospel, to the devil with the whole thing! A greater infamy and malice than Luther here shows, cannot even be imagined. Why, on a later occasion, this "blessed man of God" even boasts of his despicable wickedness. Proudly he declares that "I killed all the peasants who took part in the uprising, for I gave the order to kill them; all their blood is on my head." In another place he says, "Where such a spirit is found in the peasants it is high time that they were strangled like mad dogs."

Has ever even the most cruel tyrant more abusively incited mankind against a severely oppressed people, which in its utmost despair tried to free itself from the most terrible oppression and the most cruel injustice? No one can today form the remotest idea of the pitiable condition of the peasants at that time. They were drained of their very blood by their ecclesiastical and secular masters. They had to bear continuously the most inhuman bodily and mental tortures. Their widows and orphans were starving, their maidens seduced by the "noble" gentlemen. Luther well knew all this. Being a descendant from peasants himself, he was better acquainted with their severe fate than anybody else. In the beginning of the struggle he played the demagogue, so as to make himself popular among the people. He threatened the nobles that if these peasants did not revolt violently against them, others would; that in case they conquered these peasants, God would raise up others against them. And now that the struggle was de-

cided this "pious" man incited the nobles "to kill the mad dogs." He sings the praises of the noble gentlemen who would fall in the battle against the peasants, calling them "martyrs" and promising them good seats in heaven for their "bloodshed." How utterly revolting! What a miserably mean character is this "blessed man of God," and what a pitiful moral is contained in his famous religious doctrine of the Gospel!

As to the further course of the Reformation, one must always bear in mind that, from the very beginning, two entirely different interests were in question. In the first place the question of purely material things, such as the possession of the church properties, the liberation from insupportable duties and taxes, emancipation from the papal yoke, etc. In the second place, matters of religious faith.

From the beginning the emperor, as well as the princes and nobles, were actuated in their attitude towards the reformatory movement by political motives. The purely religious side served them only as a pretense, and, at best, played but a subordinate part in their decisions. In the same way, the people remained entirely indifferent towards the religious questions. In fact, most of them did not know what it all was about. What aroused the enthusiasm of the people was not a religious, but a social reformation. Communistic principles, improvement in their social position, the abolition of serfdom, decent wages, more lenient punishments—all these were matters in which the people were interested. For theological controversies they cared not at all. The latter were partly a pretext for the struggle between the various parties, partly a religious justification for the demands set up by them. For everything can be founded on the Bible, particularly on the Gospel; the most contradictory demands can be justified by some statement in the Bible.

As we have seen, Luther and Melancthon tried to prove through the Bible that slavery was a divine institution. Whenever it was to somebody's interest to instigate the people to rebellion, he could easily do so by supporting his arguments with various quotations from the Gospel. If on

the other hand the people were to be kept in patient endurance of the most cruel atrocities, no less appropriate quotations could be made from this same Gospel. The divine nature of communistic doctrines can easily be proven by the Bible, while, on the other hand, implicit obedience must be given to those in authority by the grace of God. The Bible is, therefore, an exceedingly convenient book. Everything can be proven by it, and every conceivable social arrangement can be supported by some Biblical quotation.

Nevertheless, the religious enthusiasts, to whom history has given the name of "reformers," considered the theological question in dispute as the real object of the struggle. Especially Luther was too short-sighted to realize that the different points in dispute, raised by him, only served the princes and the people as the means to an end. He was naïve enough to believe that the whole world had been set afire by the question whether the sacrament was to be taken in one form or in both, etc.

This utter inability on the part of Luther to realize the true state of affairs was bound to lead to that disastrous confusion which became the characteristic feature of the Reformation. In his extreme conceit, Luther believed that he, and he alone, was able correctly to interpret "the Gospel." He considered the four Gospels a direct revelation from God; everything else was the work of man. He alone was ordained to decide the political and social questions of the day by quotations from the Gospel, and woe to him who dared to express an opinion different from his own. He decided the most important questions in dispute, after his own fashion, and considered himself authorized to dictate to every one, from the emperor down to the lowest beggar, how he had to act and what he was to believe. When he so emphatically protested against acts of violence, and firmly maintained that it was un-Christian to make use of the sword, that the Gospel was to be proclaimed only by words, this meant in effect: The whole world, princes, knights, citizens, and peasants had to submit to his judgment, for he proclaimed the Word of God, the Gospel. Then, if any one dared to oppose his judgment, he ex-



claimed: "Now go on, slay, slaughter, strangle, murder, and kill those dogs."

In consequence of the extreme ignorance in which mankind was kept by Christianity, even at that time, there were any number of people, belonging to all ranks of the population, who piously believed in this proclaimer of the Gospel, and what was most characteristic of his mental limitations—he believed in himself. For this reason Luther acquired a power which can be compared to that only of the pope. Withal, he was the greatest autocrat that can be imagined. He tolerated no Gods besides himself. He, and he alone, was the herald of the Gospel. Every opinion that differed from his was devil's work. Only his exposition of the Bible was based on absolute truth. The excommunication of "heretics" by the Catholic Church was in no wise more severe than Luther's condemnation of those who dared to contradict him.

Such autocracy was bound to lead to a rupture within the Evangelical party. The very men who fought and strove for the same things Luther did, were violently attacked by him if they did not submit to him in every way, or failed to follow all his instructions. Muenzer and Carlstadt had espoused the cause of the peasants, just as Luther had done himself in the beginning. But they remained loyal to their cause and would not forsake the peasants, even when they saw that the victory would go to the opposing party. For this they were abused and persecuted beyond reason, by Luther. Muenzer reproaches him bitterly for his "hypocrisy," siding today with this party, and tomorrow with the other. He scores him for constantly boasting of his "martyrdom," while living in ease and enjoying all sorts of honors. But above all he despises him as a lickspittle and time-server. "The poor monks and priests and merchants can not defend themselves, therefore you can scold them as you please. But the godless regents shall be judged by no one, even though they tread Christianity under their feet."

Luther, by his machinations, succeeded in having Carlstadt expelled. He had a particular grudge against him,

because in the well-known controversy about the doctrine of the sacrament, Carlstadt had been the first publicly to oppose him. Carlstadt went from Saxony to Strassburg, whence his doctrine rapidly spread. "Carlstadt's poison," complains Luther, "is rapidly spreading. Zwingli, in Zurich, and Leo Judae, besides many others, have already accepted his doctrine, insistently claiming that mere bread, such as one buys at the market, is all that is contained in the sacrament."

Landgrave Philip of Hesse realized how important it was to the cause of the Protestants to restore harmony among themselves, before appearing at the Diet at Augsburg, which had been called by the emperor. What impression would it make on the emperor and the princes if the Evangelicals, who claimed to be the proclaimers of the Word of God, at the very beginning, were discordant among themselves? In order to accomplish this, he considered it best to bring about a personal interview between the heads of both parties, Luther and Zwingli. He therefore invited both men to come to Marburg, there, in the presence of the most noted theologians, to hold a religious disputation.

Luther obstinately protested against such a meeting, predicting that it would lead to nothing. Nevertheless, he was obliged to yield to the demand of the Landgrave, and thus the well-known religious conference between Luther and Zwingli took place at Marburg.

The very titles of the fifteen articles which were under consideration there show the strictly orthodox faith of the great reformers. They were:

1. On the faith in God, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, according to the Nicene Confession of Faith.
2. On the Incarnation of Christ.
3. On Christ's passion, death, resurrection, ascension, and future to the last Judgment.
4. On original sin.
5. On vindication by faith in Christ.
6. On faith as a gift of God, which can not be attained by one's own strength, but which is produced by the Holy Ghost through the Gospel.

7. That a person can become righteous and attain salvation only by faith.

8. On the "Word."

9, 10. On baptism.

11. On infant baptism.

12. On confession.

13. On the government.

14. On human contributions in priestly and ecclesiastical affairs, or so-called traditions.

15. On the doctrine of the Communion.

There were only slight differences of opinion between the two reformers concerning the first fourteen articles, so that they easily agreed upon them. But the doctrine of the Lord's Supper formed an unbridgable gulf between them. Luther stubbornly insisted on the doctrine that the bread and wine of the Eucharist were changed into the actual flesh and blood of Christ, while Zwingli saw therein only a symbol. "If God," says Luther, "had said his body was a horseshoe, we would also have to believe it; if he had commanded us to eat rotten apples or dirt, we would have to obey. Christ's body is in the bread like a sword in its sheath, like the beer in the can."

It hardly seems credible that mentally sound human beings should have ever believed such nonsense. No kitchen maid would today let any one persuade her that she had partaken of real human flesh and real human blood that is supposed to have belonged to a Jew who died 2,000 years ago. But, insane as this may sound, the more logical of the two reformers undoubtedly was Luther. The reformed Church had taken its position on the foundation of the "Gospel." Everything contained therein was to be believed absolutely. The Gospel was a direct revelation from God. Once having taken this position, being ready to believe every word contained in the Gospel, why should just the sacrament be made an exception? This doctrine is not more unbelievable or nonsensical than all other dogmas. If one believed that a God reigns in heaven, at his right a Jewish carpenter, who died 2,000 years ago; if one believed that this Jewish carpenter is the Son of God, who was resurrected after

death and ascended into heaven; if one believed all this, why not believe the other as well? For everything is possible with God. Did one not believe that Christ turned water into wine? Therefore, why not believe that he could turn blood into wine? Why draw the limit of faith just here?

Luther not only insisted on his opinion, but treated Zwingli and his adherents exactly as the Catholics treated "heretics." When Zwingli offered his hand, Luther thrust it from him, refusing to acknowledge those of a different faith as "brethren." He called them his "enemies" and turned from them with the words: "Thus we will abandon you and leave you to the just judgment of God." He promised the Landgrave to spare them in so far as one must also love one's enemies. And what bitter enemies these two religious sects became later! The most bloody battles were fought by them and the hatred that developed between them was more bitter and irreconcilable than that between the Catholics and Protestants.

When the Protestants read the well-known "Augsburg Confession" before the Diet, the adherents of the Catholic faith realized that the "Luther heresy," after all, contained nothing that did not emanate from their own doctrines. They were not positive doctrines, through which the reformed party had placed itself in opposition to the Catholic Church. The motive of their opposition was the desire for the abolition of "abuses." The administration of the communion in one form, celibacy, the mass, confession, the traditional doctrine, monastical vows, the hierarchical power of the Church—these were the "abuses" on the abolition of which the Protestants insisted; in their positive religious doctrine they hardly differed from that of the Catholics.

In view of this fact, hope was not given up, in certain circles, of bringing about an agreement between the two parties and re-establishing the unity of the Christian Church. For this purpose, each party elected two princes, two jurists and three theologians, who were to try and accomplish this adjustment. The transactions really appeared to result in a very satisfactory settlement. Both sides were

willing to meet the wishes of the opposing party as far as possible, to arrive at the desired goal.

Melancthon was one of the Evangelical theologians of this commission. He, as well as his colleagues, had reconciled himself to the idea of returning to the bishops their jurisdiction, of conceding to them the right of excommunication and the supervision of the priests, if they, on their side, would not interfere with the free preaching of the Gospel. The care of religious affairs, said Melancthon, would cause secular princes too much expense and trouble. He did not wish to reinstate the old power of the bishops, but was willing to re-establish their authority, "for I see what kind of a Church we are going to have if the constitution of the Church is dissolved. I see that in future the tyranny will be far greater than what it has been."

It really looked as if an agreement between the two parties was going to be consummated. At any rate, those transactions prove that such an agreement was possible, and might have taken place if personal considerations had not intervened as insurmountable barriers. They had counted without their host. Luther would hear absolutely nothing about an agreement. "I hear," he wrote, "that you have begun a remarkable piece of work; to reconcile the pope and Luther; but the pope does not wish it, and Luther positively refuses. You had better save all your efforts and pains. When you arrange the matter against the will of both of these, I will soon follow your example and reconcile Christ with the devil."

This one expression is sufficient to give you an idea of Luther's character and sentiments, and plainly shows the egotistical motives which impelled the "great reformer" in his actions. In a decision on which the weal or woe of all of Christendom depends, he thinks only of "Luther and the Pope." With him it is, therefore, not a question of reconciling the Protestant party with that of the Catholics, but merely a question of the person of Luther. After the delegates of both parties had done their utmost to bring about a reconciliation, and this much desired, blessed purpose had nearly been accomplished, Luther steps in and refuses posi-

tively to be reconciled with the pope. If such a reconciliation were to be brought about against his will, it would be just as good as reconciling Christ and the devil. We leave it to the reader to appreciate the amount of arrogance and wickedness contained in this one statement. Who could doubt for an instant that Luther was concerned only with satisfying his personal vanity and was mighty little troubled about the welfare of mankind? He desired reconciliation with no one, because he wanted to be the sole head of the "Lutheran Church." He was an autocrat of the purest water, and Melancthon was right when he expressed the fear "that in future the tyranny would be far more insupportable than it ever was before."

Whoever requires further proof to convince him of the despicableness of Luther's character only need read his writings. After having expressed, in the just quoted letter to Spalatin, his stubborn implacableness, he wrote one article: "Warnings of Martin Luther to his Beloved Germans," in which he again praises himself as the great hero of peace. This article begins with the statement that he had fervently implored the priests at the Diet of Augsburg not to leave the place until peace had been restored. Then, of course, he puts the entire blame for the irreconcilable spirit on the "Papists," and prophesies that it must come to war, or to revolt, or even perhaps to both. In purely Jesuitical manner he says that they are not to depend on his doctrines, in which he states that no one shall offer resistance by force of arms, and that the "harassments of tyrants" must be endured without opposition and without agitation, inciting to revolt. It is true, he said, that this is his doctrine, but the people would probably not follow it. What a wicked attempt this is to circumvent his own words!

In case that he were killed in a revolution, they would then feel his power more than ever. For he would take "a lot of bishops, priests, and monks with him, so that people would say that Doctor Martinus was conducted to the grave by a great procession. For he is a great doctor above all bishops, priests, and monks. And, finally, they would make a pilgrimage together, they, the Papists, in the

abyss of hell to their lying, murderous God, whom they served with lies and murder. But I to my Lord, Jesus Christ, whom I have served in truth and peace."

Luther's conceit has no limits. Any one reading an article like this, without being conversant with the rest of his life, might possibly consider him a paranoiac. In the same style he continues: "Thus we go hence together, they in the name of all the devils to hell, I in the name of God, to heaven. Certainly no one can harm me, that I know. They can not make it so bad, but I will make it worse for them. And their heads shall not be so hard, but I will have a still harder one. If they had not only this Emperor Charles, but the Turkish emperor, too, on their side, it would neither frighten nor discourage me, but I will make them afraid and discouraged. They shall flee from me, for I shall not flee. I will remain, they shall perish. My life shall be their hangman, my death their devil."

Such was the language which Luther used against the emperor and the princes, against the pope and the high dignitaries of the Church. It needed no courage for this impudent abuse, for he was always well guarded by his Elector, and was sure that no one could do him any harm. Besides, he was well aware that his enemies had more to fear from his death than from him while he was alive. It is this fact to which the foregoing boastful words refer.

He continuously asserts, like the wolf in sheep's clothing, that he is the guardian of peace, while at the same time he openly incites to war and revolt. "Although it is not seemly for me to fight, nor to advise and instigate others to fight, since I am a preacher in the office of the Church, but rather to advise peace wherever is war, as I have always done, as all the world can witness; but since our enemies do not want peace, but war, if, then, it comes to war, I will truly silence my pen and keep still and interfere no more as I did in the last revolution, but will let things take their course, even though no bishop, no pope, no monk be spared. Furthermore, I will not have one or two papists, but the whole Popedom on my head until the Judge in heaven knocks them down. I will not and can not be afraid

of such miserable enemies of God. Their scorn is my pride, their anger my laughter. They can take nothing from me but a bag of old flesh. But what I can take from them, they will soon find out."

Further on he even promises the people that he will justify a revolution by calling it "self-defense."

"If it comes to war, I will not berate the party which resists the murderous and blood-thirsty papists as revolutionists, nor shall I allow others to call them so, but will see to it that it is said to have been done in self-defense. Not that by this I wish to incite any one against another, nor arouse him to such defense, nor justify it, for it is not my business to do so, much less do I wish to act as a judge in this matter. A Christian knows very well what he has to do, that he give to God what is God's, and to the emperor what is his, but not to the bloodhounds what does not belong to them. . . . For they have no right, neither divine nor worldly, on their side, but act from pure wickedness against every divine and worldly right, like murderers and scoundrels."

In the most profane language, in expressions which no decent man would allow to pass his lips, Luther holds forth against the crowned heads of his time. He openly instigated the people to refuse obedience to the emperor, in case he takes sides with the pope. Whoever remains loyal to the emperor becomes disloyal to God, and thereby commits the greatest sin. Again and again he then asserts that he "does not wish to incite others to war. It was not his place to preach revolt."

The tone he uses in his book, "The Answer of Martin Luther to King Henry of England's Book," is altogether outrageous. No matter what one may think of Henry VIII., he was still the crowned head of a mighty nation, who, despite his faults, also had good qualities. No decent man would make use of such expressions to any private person as Luther hurled against the king. And this is the man who, when it suited him, preached to the nobles and later to the peasants, that the princes were ordained by the grace of God, and that even the greatest injustice inflicted



by them was to be patiently endured, vengeance belonging to God alone.

In his book, Henry VIII. did not defend the abuses of the Catholic Church, but merely the various dogmas, such as the masses, etc., against Luther's attacks, confining himself strictly to his subject, without any personal feeling, while Luther, in his answer, attacks the person of the king and covers him with pitch. He calls him "Henry, by the displeasure of God," "a miserable liar," a "blasphemous tongue," "a silly idiot," who understands nothing of the Holy Scriptures and still writes about them "and gives his impudent opinion." He would show to what it would lead "if an ass that had been created to carry burdens, wanted to read the Psalms." "Thou miserable Heyntze Church, how miserably does thy protector guard thee with such coarse, foolish, lying drivel in this book! . . . King Henry must help to prove the truth of the saying that there are no greater fools than kings and princes." "King Henry with his poisonous, lying tongue blasphemes and condemns the doctrine of our faith. Thou miserable damn liar."

The book is kept throughout in this tone. He continually calls the king "poisonous liar," "damned fool," "miserable villain," and similar names. He hesitates at nothing to belittle the king in the eyes of the world and to represent him as a criminal. In the conclusion of the book, we find: "But I believe that he has written this book for no other reason but because his conscience trembles. For he well knows with what right he possesses the Kingdom of England, after the royal family has been assassinated and the royal blood exterminated. He is afraid for his life, their blood might be revenged on him. For that reason he wants to hang onto the Pope, to flatter him, so as to secure himself on the throne. In the same way he formerly hung on to the emperor, and now on to the king of France, like tyrants who have a bad conscience generally do. They fit well together, the Pope and Henry of England. The one has inherited his popedom with the same good conscience

as the other his kingdom. Therefore they scratch each other, just as donkeys do."

What detestable infamy to use such language towards the crowned head of another nation in a book which is intended for the discussion of a theological controversy!

Even more disgusting, if that be possible, than this abominable book, is a further proof of his absolute lack of character, given three and a half years later. At that time reports concerning Henry's intended divorce and possible separation from the pope being in circulation, Luther thought that he might possibly transplant his fame as a great "reformer" to England, too, and therefore regretted having spoiled his chance by his contemptible behavior towards the king. So this man is dishonorable enough to write an humble, imploring letter to the king, in which he begs forgiveness on his knees. He excuses himself, saying that he "is an unworthy, despised person, a worm, misled by evilly inclined people, who had let himself be persuaded to speak impertinently against the high potentate and mighty king." "On his knees," he begs for forgiveness, declaring himself not only willing to retract everything dishonoring written against the king by him, but also "through a public booklet" to do honor to him.

When the king, in a letter, the composition of which is attributed to Erasmus, answered this epistle with disdain, Luther, seeing that the reform business in England was spoiled for him, fell back into his old style, and heaped renewed abuse on the king in an article entitled: "Answer to the King of England's Blasphemous Article."

It is one of the most incredible things in history, that such a man, whose rascality is down in black and white, is revered as one of the greatest heroes of all times. Does it seem possible that in Germany a man should be worshiped almost as a God, who upon every occasion venomously abused the kings and princes, calling them "fools," "traitors," and "scoundrels"; who openly incited the people to high treason and disobedience to their emperor; who did all this not from sincere conviction but from purely selfish motives, as is proved by the constant change in his

tactics. And you have not to deal here with a subjective opinion about a person, which might be refuted by somebody else; it is not a personal view, an individual judgment; it is a matter of facts, of letters, articles, and books which can be read by every one, which can be found in every public library; there you can see in black and white what we have been able to indicate in only the briefest way. And this man is pointed out to children in school as the most ideal character, as the "blessed man of God," as "the founder of modern Christianity"!

Perhaps some readers will ask why we do not regard Luther's incredible conceit as a delusion of grandeur, and himself a paranoiac. In reading the before-cited article: "Warning to my beloved Germans," one might indeed get this impression. An investigation, however, of the man's whole life and actions absolutely disproves such an assumption. No paranoiac would ever, like Luther, diplomatically tack between the parties until the victory was decided for one or the other. The paranoiac, whose actions are determined by delusions, sticks firmly to the idea that has once taken hold of him, irrespective of any utilitarian considerations. He does by no means invariably act in accordance with what would be for his own advantage, although his ego is always uppermost in his mind. Luther acted like a real unscrupulous politician, who always has his eyes fixed on his personal advantage, who knows how to make capital out of every situation. No! According to our ideas of morality, Luther was—bad, but not insane.

And still we must put in a word of excuse for the conduct of this remarkable man, inasmuch as it is of quite particular interest to our special purpose. Luther was judged by many of his contemporaries—and not only by Catholics but by those of his own faith—in the same way that we have judged him here. Nevertheless, he was the object of the worship and admiration of an enormous mass of people, a following such as few mortals have had. And among his adherents there were many whose opinion was not influenced, like that of the masses, by selfish interests, but was the result of a sincere feeling of admiration. How can

we reconcile with this fact a character which, according to our ideas of good and bad, we must condemn as immoral and wicked?

To us there can be nothing more despicable than this tacking between two parties, keeping on good terms with both of them until after the battle has been decided, and then going over to the victorious side and allowing himself to be revered as the real victor, hurling all the curses of heaven and hell on the defeated party. The Englishman considers it the most despicable cowardice to "hit a man when he is down." And this is just what Luther did during his whole life, upon every occasion. Contemptible as such conduct may appear to us today, we would still be doing Luther a great injustice if we saw in him only the unscrupulous politician, occupied only with advancing his personal gain by clever calculations.

To judge Luther correctly, you must above all things bear in mind his religious faith. He did not, like most people, blindly believe in a personal God and living devil, without drawing the logical consequences from such faith, but allowed the results of faith, in all their details, to influence every occurrence of his inner and outer world. He believed himself, in the true sense of the word, guided by God in everything he did, and at the same time persecuted by the devil. Everything good he attributed to God, everything evil to the devil. Every conflict in his life, no matter how unimportant, represented a struggle between these two powers, that of the Lord and that of Satan. Every disease, every distemper, was the work of the devil, every recovery denotes the mercy of God. In all his letters in which he speaks of his health he expresses himself in this way. In a letter to Melancthon he described a ringing in his ears saying: "I am, thank God, quite well, through your prayers, though for several weeks Satan has filled my head with ringing." This must not be construed as a symbolical manner of expression, or a mere fashion of speech. Luther really means a personal devil, who causes him pain. In another letter he says: "Do not be alarmed about my illness, it is uncertain, because I feel that it is no natural disease,

and therefore I suffer bravely the blows of the devil's emissaries, which they inflict upon my body. If I am not allowed to read or write, I still may think, pray, and rage against the devil; after that I can sleep, enjoy things, play and sing. From the castle full of devils, but where Christ reigns among his enemies." On the 12th of May, 1530, he wrote to Melancthon: "On the day when I received your letter from Nuremberg, the messengers of Satan were with me; I was alone. Veit and Cyriax had gone out; and he succeeded inasmuch as he drove me out of my chamber and forced me to go among the people." What Luther here describes is not, as may be supposed, an hallucination, such as paranoiacs have, but a feeling of depression, which forced him to go among the people to seek diversion. As he did in the case of every disease, every pain, so he also construed this unpleasant feeling as the work of the devil.

He likewise looked upon everything evil in the world as the work of Satan, everything good the work of God. The trade in indulgences was a work of the devil. He pictured the matter to himself thus: The devil had entered the bodies of certain persons, through whom he then accomplished his infamous acts. He describes his first dispute with John Eck as follows: He wanted to withdraw into seclusion, to study the Holy Scriptures. "Since in doing so, I did not act secretly, the evil spirit fixed his eye upon me, and became aware of this. He immediately awakened, with his silly ambition, his servant, John Eck, a particular enemy of Christ and the truth; told him that he must force me, unprepared, into a dispute, and attack me upon the slightest word which escaped me unawares about the pope."

Like everything concerning his person, so also every event in the outer world was the work of supernatural powers. If God wished to punish any one, he made him blind to conditions around him, thus leading him to destruction. The danger of a revolution of the peasantry against the nobility, he describes in the words: "Everywhere the people is excited and has eyes open; it will and can not be oppressed by force. It is the Lord who does this, and hides

the threats and impending dangers from the eyes of the princes." Just as God once made the heart of Pharaoh hard and cruel to punish him for his sins and to show his mercy to the children of Israel, so he now perverted the minds of the princes and filled them with cruelty—to make an end of them. "God Almighty," he writes, "has made our princes mad, so that they think they can do and command their subjects to do anything they choose. God has given them perverted minds and wants to make an end of them, just as he did with the Christian autocrats."

The direct consequence to which such a deistical fatalism logically had to lead, was the view that the result of every struggle between individuals, between classes or nations represented the will or judgment of God. The victor was ordained by God, for God gave him the victory. The defeated one, on the contrary, was accursed by God. He had received just punishment for his sins.

Such a manner of viewing life was not only the logical consequence of a belief in an individual God, but also corresponded perfectly with the various superstitions of that time. Thus, for example, the many trials by "ordeal" or "judgment of God" were based on this view. The judgment of the cross, the water and fire tests, are the result of the same idea, namely that God, who is omnipotent and can discriminate between the innocent and the guilty, proclaims his judgment to mankind by the result of those "ordeals."

Absurd as such a proposition must appear to every educated person today, it is nevertheless the logical result of the belief in an individual God. If one believes in a personal God who concerns himself with the weal and woe of every single human being, who ordains and guides human actions, whose decrees can be influenced by prayer—if one believes this, why not believe that God proclaims his will in this way? It is even far easier for a logically trained mind to believe all this with its corollaries and consequences, than to stop half way and thereby laugh in the face of all logic.

At any rate, Luther being possessed of this faith makes

his actions appear in an entirely different light. He did not go over to the side of the princes merely because they were victorious, but because God had given them the victory and thereby proclaimed his will. He wanted to have the peasants killed like mad dogs, not because they were defeated in battle, but because God had forsaken them and in doing so had manifested his judgment to the world. Luther did not believe that he went over to the side of the victors as such, but to the side which had been pointed out to him by the finger of God as the right one. In view of this, that exceedingly brutal expression in which Luther boasts that "in the revolution I killed all the peasants, for I ordered that they be killed; all their blood is on my head," loses its venom. He believed that he was doing a pious deed, since God himself revealed his will through the result of the struggle.

His religious faith is also responsible for the fanaticism with which he declaimed against the Jews. In the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews throughout the world he saw a divine judgment, to further which was the duty of every good Christian. Here is his "Christian advice" as to how to treat the Jews: "Their synagogues should be set afire and razed to the earth, their houses should be destroyed, their prayer books and Talmuds, in which such idolatry, lies, curses, and blasphemy are taught, should be forbidden, the rabbis should be forbidden to teach, the others to trade; particularly, usury should be prohibited, and the property stolen by them by usury or robbery should be taken from them and kept by the government; but the strong young Jews and Jewesses should be given flail, ax, hoe, spade, distaff, spindle, to let them earn their bread by the sweat of their brows, as is proper for the children of Adam. But if they do not wish to suffer this, or there be danger in employing them, they should be driven from the country."

Luther's extreme conceit also assumes a more comprehensible character from its religious foundation. While John Huss, and so many others with him who opposed the abuses of the Church, had to pay for their sincerity with a

cruel death at the stake, Luther came out from all conflicts, even from the most dangerous situations, without a scratch. Of course, he believed that the hand of God was in this also, and proudly he saw in himself the one whom God had ordained to fight for "the Gospel." In this sense he wrote that he would ascend to heaven, while the Papists, the bishops, and priests, and monks were doomed to hell.

If, viewed from this standpoint, the character of Luther is stripped of that wickedness and infamy which we otherwise must see in it, we can not fail, on the other hand, to be struck by the imbecility which shows itself in these narrow-minded ideas. In answer to this, it may be said that such a philosophy corresponded to the character of the times, and that therefore Luther should not be reproached for it. This is perfectly true, and we would not be at all astonished at Luther's narrow-mindedness, if it had been that of merely a man in private life. But Luther was the founder of a new religion; he is praised to the children in school as one of the greatest men that ever lived, and his religious doctrines are yet today the standard of instruction in religious faith. If we speak of Luther's faith, we mean that religious creed which is supposed to represent a "reformation" of the old Church-doctrine. We have not entered into the details of his character because of his personality—this, at best, would be a matter of indifference—but we had to try to ascertain of what nature was the new doctrine which was considered a reform of the old faith, and what kind of a man the hero was who is held up to our children as the great ideal worthy of their highest admiration.

It is true, Luther's religious faith furnishes an excuse for a mental attitude and conduct which, without such an explanation, must appear wicked and infamous to us, today. But still one is compelled to ask, what are we to think of a religion which influences the character of human beings to such an extent that from our viewpoint of morality we must consider it wicked and infamous? Must not such a religious doctrine prove a curse and blight to mankind? By all means! Christianity, from its very beginning, was a



curse and blight to the human race, and a curse and blight the Reformation was to prove itself anew!

To correctly judge the influence the Reformation has had on the development of civilization, we must always keep these two things apart: Individual religious faith and the political conditions created by the Reformation.

By a "reform" one generally understands an improvement, a progression, a step forward. The view is generally prevalent, at least in Protestant countries, that the Reformation of the Church also represents a progression in the matter of religious faith. The greatest superstition is usually associated with the old Catholic faith, and, on the other hand, the Reformed Church is called liberal, free from all "superstition," purified and enlightened by the "Word of God." But this is a decided mistake. The creed of the Evangelical Church was as orthodox as any creed could possibly be. Whoever wishes to convince himself of this need only read Luther's confession of faith, which seems to be very little known. As an illustration of the nature of his faith, we shall mention only one passage of this confession: "Finally I believe in the resurrection of all the dead on the last day, of both the pious and the wicked, that every one may receive in his body what he has deserved; and therefore the pious will receive eternal life with Christ, and the wicked eternal death with Satan and his angels. For I do not agree with them who teach that devils will also finally attain salvation." Can there be an admission of a "reformation" of faith so long as such nonsense is taught, so long as one believes in the actual existence of living devils?

Furthermore, can we admit there has been a reformation of faith, so long as one believes in the actual existence of the flesh and blood of Christ in the Sacrament? Has any religion ever taught more frightful nonsense? And does it seem possible that on account of this nonsense nations destroyed one another in the most devastating wars?

The "Evangelical" creed is based on the four Gospels. It teaches that these Gospels were of divine origin, and that therefore every word contained therein must be believed

absolutely, and that, on the other hand, whatever can not be proven by the Gospel is to be discredited. Relying on this, Luther, in the various religious disputations, always wanted to be refuted through the Holy Scriptures. Only if this could be done, would he recant. This was the only authority he recognized.

The Catholics, on the other hand, assert that Scripture is not the only rule of faith; that tradition must be placed on the same footing, and received with equal reverence with the Bible. The writings of the fathers of the Church and the various doctrines and modifications of the popes are regarded by them as equal authorities with the Bible itself. Every one with ever so little sound common sense had to admit the many contradictions and impossibilities contained in the utterances of Christ, as stated in the Gospels, and to take everything literally was absolutely impossible. This is undoubtedly the reason why the Catholics forbade the laity to read the Bible. These difficulties could be overcome only by "interpretations" and "symbolizations," and the Church was, therefore, compelled to acknowledge the authority of "tradition."

This was the difference between the old and the new doctrine, as to the religious creed, and the question is whether the latter can be regarded as a real reformation.

It is true that the high dignitaries of the Catholic Church at that time used their positions to despoil the people, and that they tried to justify the most outrageous abuses, by which they advanced their personal interests, through their interpretations of the Holy Scriptures. The scandalous trade in indulgences, the business that was done by reading masses, as well as all other abuses of the Church, could not fail to fill every right-minded person with disgust, and with regard to these abuses the Evangelical doctrine appears indeed as a reform. But, corrupt and execrable as the whole hierarchy may have been at that time, one must admit that only individual persons were guilty of these abuses. It was to be hoped that mankind would improve, that generations would follow who would abolish these evil conditions and replace them by beneficial meas-

ures. All this was possible. In a word, the Catholic Church, with the infallibility of the pope at its head, is capable of reform. As a fact, the Catholic Church of today is as different from that of four hundred years ago as day is from night. And what could not a liberal minded, ideally disposed pope accomplish today did he only wish to advance with his time!

The Evangelical Church certainly did free itself, at that time, from these abuses. It pointed out that these were not authorized by the Gospel, and consequently were to be discarded. For only what was to be found in the Gospel was of divine origin. In this respect, the Evangelical Church could indeed be considered a reform, at that time, having abolished most horrible abuses. This, however, could have been accomplished also without the Evangelical confession of faith. But the faith in the letter of the Gospel is rigid and unalterable and capable of no reform. The Gospels are the same today that they were 400 years ago, and will be the same for all time to come. A doctrine which is based on the divinity of these Gospels, which teaches a literal belief in these writings, is cold and dead and incapable of any kind of development. From that point of view the Evangelical doctrine represents no reform, and is to be regarded rather as a step backwards than a progress.

As to the political side of the Reformation, its only purpose was emancipation from the pope.

The rivalry between the secular and ecclesiastical power within the different countries had to lead to continuous conflicts, and in international complications the decree of the pope, who naturally had first of all his own interests at heart, was of the greatest importance. The popedom was, therefore, a two-edged sword for the sovereign princes, which could as easily be turned against them as offer support to them in their struggles. In consequence of the different kinds of interests and the exceedingly complicated political conditions of that time, the relation of the governments of the European countries to the pope were quite manifold. The only question at the time of the Reformation was whether one should separate from the pope or not.

Everything else was merely a pretext. The religious doctrine was scarcely taken into consideration.

In England Henry VIII., after, at the beginning of his reign, so enthusiastically espousing the cause of the pope that the latter conferred upon him the title of "Defender of the Faith," for personal reasons, namely, to secure a divorce from his wife, separated himself from the pope.

In Germany matters were not so simple. The prevailing political conditions were of a very complicated nature. Had Charles V. been a German, and had he had no other interests but those of his country, the Reformation would have given him the opportunity to re-establish a really united country with one supreme government. He would have been able to restore the long-since decayed dignity of the imperial throne. He could have used the revolution of the nobility and the peasantry to break the power of the princes, and to make the imperial throne, like the royal thrones of England and France, the immediate head of the Empire. By separating from the pope, the enormous possessions of the Church would have fallen into his hands, and the German Empire would have developed a never-dreamed-of strength and glory.

But to Charles the German Empire was a matter of secondary consideration. He was, above all things, king of Spain, and as such he could not think of leaving the Catholic Church. As king of Naples and Sicily, such a step was even less to be thought of. Besides this, Charles saw himself constantly threatened in the East by the Turks, against whom he needed the assistance of the pope. In the West, as well as in Italy, Francis I. waited only for an opportunity to overthrow his rival. Charles was therefore forced to remain loyal to the Catholic religion.

It has always been the principal interest of the German princes to maintain their independence of the emperor, wherefore the electors had bound his hands at the election by the so-called "capitulation." The one group, namely, the ecclesiastical princes, saw in their direct contact with the pope a strong support for this purpose, while the others thought that by separating themselves from the Papal

Church and acquiring the valuable Church properties, they could secure their independence.

In this way the unfortunate rupture of the Church within Germany came about, a rupture that was to lead to the most bloody, devastating civil wars. For a hundred years, without interruption, the religious wars raged in Germany, beginning with the Schmalkaldian war and stretching out to the Peace of Westphalia, which only in the year 1648 terminated the thirty years' war.

Those horrible wars, with their inhuman cruelties, which raged in all the European countries between "Christian brethren" of different creeds, we naturally can not describe here. Whole folios could be written on the subject; how the people in burning hatred, in insane fanaticism and brutal bestiality fell upon one another because of the differences of their foolish superstitions. The waves of battle did not rage only between Catholics and Protestants; the various sects that had come into being through the new doctrine, hated each other even more bitterly, if that were possible, than they hated the adherents of the pope. The persecution of heretics, with fire and sword, by the Catholic clergy had always been carried on for political reasons, that is, to maintain the unity of the Christian Church, to prevent any rupture within the Church, thereby preserving the integrity of the power concentrated in one hand. In comparison with this, the reformed Church appeared more honest and sincere, for in it this political motive was lacking. Nevertheless, the Protestant sects were no less intolerant against those of another faith. The only difference was, that the intolerance of the Catholics was based on political reasons, while the Protestants condemned, from purely religious fanaticism, the slightest deviation from their own religious doctrine.

We have seen how intolerant Luther was towards those of another faith; how he pushed Zwingli from him as a "heretic" and abandoned him "to the just judgment of God," only because of his narrow-minded superstition in the matter of the Communion. But the other "Reformers" were just as intolerant. The Evangelical creed was based on the

strictest orthodoxy, which declared every deviation from the letter a deadly sin.

While Luther occupied himself exclusively with the religious creed, in which alone he saw the salvation of humanity, Zwingli closely intertwined religious and social elements, so that by him religion and state were merged into an inseparable entity. The state was a theocratic institution, Christ was the Lord, not only of the Kingdom of Heaven, but of earth; the respective governments were, so to say, the instruments of the divine will. The practical consequences of this theocratic doctrine were of far-reaching importance. The penal code remained no longer confined to social offenses and crimes, but was gradually extended to the sphere of morality as well as to ethical and religious manifestations. According to Zwingli's philosophy, moral and religious offenses were greater crimes than violations of the laws of the state, the latter constituting a wrong against men, while the former were to be accorded as high treason against the holy majesty of God. Consequently, the punishment for moral and religious offenses were to be more severe. People who had violated the laws of morality were sentenced to long imprisonment or exile from the country. Adultery was punished with death by drowning.

After Zwingli, the theocratic principle was represented chiefly by Calvin. He is the founder of the Presbyterian organization, which derives its name from the seniors, or "Presbyters," whom the congregation elected to administer their affairs. Besides this, in Geneva a "Consistorium," composed of twelve ecclesiastical and twelve secular members, was established, whose presidency was to be given to one of the syndicate, although during his lifetime Calvin filled this office himself. It was the duty of the Consistorium to see "that the city was kept in good order and in fear of God." Accordingly it became the "tribunal of morals," before which all those were to be taken "who by their conduct had aroused anger or indignation, and in whom the exhortations to save their souls had remained fruitless." One of the most severe penalties was that of excommunica-

tion, by which the guilty person was excluded from the Church until by public penance, imposed by the Church, he had sufficiently expiated his crime.

Such police control of the morals of the citizens, with the fanatical Calvin at its head, naturally became a frightful yoke to the members of the congregation. Calvin's moral principles were not only inordinately strict, but in part really absurd, since he applied them to things about which he could have no actual knowledge. Thus, for example, his sense of morality was offended "if somebody took interest on his money, or sold anything for more than he had paid for it, if it had not been improved by him." Of course, commerce and industry were destroyed entirely by such absurd principles.

It was the duty of the preachers to make formal investigations into the manner of life led by the families in their own homes; they had to watch their action and carry on a regular espionage. If any one was lax in his attendance at Church, or was guilty of anything else that did not agree with the moral ideas of the "Consistorium," he was at first exhorted, and, if this proved ineffectual, was put under charges. Rich and poor, the prince as well as the beggar, had to submit to the criminal court of the Consistorium.

The strictness with which the mode of life of the individuals belonging to the "reformed" Church was supervised, was therefore far greater than was the case among the Catholics. The Catholic clergy really did not trouble itself very much about the mode of life led by the individual, as long as he did not interfere with the authority of the Church. All that a good Catholic had to do was to revere the authority of the Church by word and deed; everything else was left to his own judgment. But now every individual was no longer at liberty to do what his own conscience dictated, but, as the child has to obey its mother, every member of the congregation had to observe the moral precepts laid down by the Consistorium.

This insufferable tyranny, which laid upon the people a yoke which killed all individuality, by which all free thought was forcibly suppressed, was bound, in time, to lead to that

abominable hypocrisy which is yet today one of the main characteristics of strictly religious Protestant countries.

If one stops to think that the strictly orthodox Protestant religious creed is, if possible, richer in absurd superstitions than Catholicism, one will perhaps be able to get an approximate idea of the frightful cruelties perpetrated on these poor people by a fanatical moral-board. "According to the principle that blasphemy and sorcery were not to be less severely punished by the secular authorities than robbery and murder, it happened that in the span of time from 1542 to 1546 the Consistorium had executed 58 death sentences, besides 76 sentences of banishment."

The most horrible side of the tyrannical character of this system showed itself in the execution of the order to eradicate "sorcery." When a pestilence broke out in Geneva, arrest, torture, the sword, the gallows and the stake raged in the city of Calvin with atrocious brutality. From the 17th of February to the 15th of May, 1545, the hangman had to put to death, in various ways, 34 persons, among them his own mother, and his arm often grew lame, while the keeper of the prison declared that the prisons were over-filled and he could house no more.

That the most violent measures were necessary to maintain this tyranny of the priests, based on fanatical superstition, is self-evident. It is remarkable enough that such an institution could have been maintained at all, that mankind was willing to submit to the most unheard-of humiliation. Just try to imagine the method of that Consistorium, the power of that court, which united the functions of accusers, judges, and executors in one hand. Think of the humiliated sense of honor which must have filled the citizens, when the priests and elders went from house to house to investigate the mode of life led by the family, and their morals, just as the teacher watches over the behavior of his pupils, and threatened to punish the most harmless acts with the severest penalties. Just think of the hypocrisy, the intrigues, and the wicked system of informing, to which such an institution must have given rise. Think also of the hatred and bitterness that honest men could not help but feel to-



wards a religion which set a fixed rule for what was to be spent for food and clothing, which forbade dancing, pilloried card-playing and prohibited the reading of certain books, such as the romances of Amadi. And all this they called "*Reformation*"!

The fanatic fury with which every person who dared to question the divinity of the "reformed" Church doctrine was persecuted, was far worse than the Catholic Tribunal of Inquisition. Geneva was not unjustly called "the citadel of an orthodoxy armed with the strictest discipline."

An example of this fury of religious persecution may be offered by the fate to which the unfortunate Michael Servetus fell a victim. This ingenious man had studied philosophy, natural sciences, and also theology, and by the combination of these various sciences had formed his own philosophy. As early as his twenty-second year, 1531, he had published a book under the title: "*De Trinitatis Erroribus*," which, as the title suggested, is directed against the prevailing doctrine of the Trinity. By this he antagonized equally the Catholics and the Protestants. After many futile efforts, he found at last in the year 1553 a printer who secretly brought out his article under the title, "*The Restitution of Christianity*," in which he presents the Trinity as "the revelation of the primary cause in light and word, perfected in God incarnate and imparted by the Holy Ghost." The book created a great sensation and was everywhere forbidden by the priests. Servetus had managed to keep out of prison in Vienne, but was burned in effigy as a heretic by the tribunal. But when he came to Geneva, where he remained in hiding for several weeks, he was arrested immediately before his intended departure from the city, at the instigation of Calvin. In the following words Calvin himself tells what induced him to take this step: "I freely admit," he says, "that I considered it my duty to do everything in my power to check a more than obdurate, incorrigible person, and to prevent his further perniciousness. Daily wickedness spreads more and more; everywhere new errors arise, and persons whom God has given the power do not take proper care to further the glory of his name.

For if the Papists punish so severely the deviations from their superstition, Christian authorities must be ashamed to show so little courage in defending the absolute truth." These words show quite clearly how the representatives of religious sects always look upon what others teach as "superstition," but consider their own doctrines "absolute truths."

Calvin was firmly convinced that the salvation of the soul depended on the recognition of these "truths"; he therefore went to the prison several times to visit the prisoner to try to change his views. But when he found his efforts vain, he felt himself justified in assuming that Servetus was a depraved person, for whose correction there was no further hope. Theodore Beza, who was one of the greatest "reformed" theologians, Calvin's friend and biographer, judged the accused man in exactly the same way. He calls him a monster, crammed full of blasphemies and wickedness, and says that his speeches and writings were a pestilence to heaven and earth.

After the opinion of the other reformed Churches in Switzerland on Servetus' heretical doctrines had been obtained, the tribunal at Geneva sentenced him to be burned alive at the stake for his heresies, particularly because of his blasphemies against the Trinity and the baptism of infants. Servetus could not at first believe at all that, in a reformed city, people could act with such despicable fanaticism against a person of a different way of thinking; and when he was assured of the sad certainty he almost went out of his mind from fright. Then he gathered himself together and again proclaimed the justice of his cause; finally he even condescended to beg for mercy and pity, but all in vain. Even on the day of his death, Calvin went to him in the prison and attempted to convert him. Servetus asserted with tears that he could not feel convinced by the reasons Calvin gave, and on his leaving begged forgiveness for any discourtesy he might unwittingly have shown him. To those who remained with him to the last, he said: "I am not afraid of death; but to suffer it as a common criminal, that breaks my heart. Jesus, my Savior and Redeemer, comfort

me, as thou once wast comforted! The dragon which I wanted to conquer overpowers me."

Hereupon, with a numerous escort, he was led to the city hall and there his sentence was again read aloud to him, with the usual ceremonies. In terror he fell upon his knees, and implored them, as he had already done when his sentence was announced to him, to let him die by the sword "If I have erred," he added, "I erred through ignorance. It was not my intention to censure. I believed that I was promoting the honor of God and felt compelled to make my convictions known in the service of truth. But, if I have erred, you attain your object by my death, no matter how it is inflicted." Everything was in vain; he was led to the stake. Unfortunately, quite green, damp wood had been supplied for fuel. Sitting on a low block of wood and chained to a post directly behind him, he now saw the pyre lit with difficulty, and almost roasted by the slow fire that would not burst into flames, the poor unfortunate suffered the agonies of death for more than half an hour, during which he incessantly cried out: "Jesus, thou Son of the eternal God, have pity on me." Finally, the people who were standing near, overcome with pity, threw a burning bundle of wood onto his body, so that his indescribable agonies at last came to an end. And this they called "*Reformation*"!

Servetus' shameful murder is one of the most despicable events in history. It is true, thousands of other persons have had to expiate their loyalty to their convictions at the stake, hundreds of thousands of innocent persons have fallen victims to religious fanaticism; but what makes the case of Servetus so remarkable is the fact that those who perpetrated this shameful deed were so-called "reformers," that there was no other motive in play here but the disgusting stupidity of religious superstition. That damnable institution, the Inquisition, is today despised by the whole civilized world; the witches and devils' creed, which cost the lives of so many innocent persons, is today considered one of the greatest mental aberrations; but the "Reformers" of the sixteenth century are even today revered

as great heroes to whom the world owes eternal gratitude. Only a short time ago Calvin's four hundredth birthday anniversary was celebrated with the greatest pomp all over the world. In Germany a "Reform-festival" takes place every year, and to the children in school we tell the fable that the rise of civilization is due to the Reformation.

The responsibility for this atrocity committed against Servetus does not rest on a single man, who allowed himself to be carried so far in his fanaticism as to commit such an insane act. It is the "Evangelical" faith which was responsible for this monument of human bestiality. Any one who like the reformers was convinced that the Gospel was of divine origin, that every word contained in it represents an "absolute truth," had to regard every contradiction of this doctrine as a deadly sin. In the commission of these cruelties, the reformers merely obeyed the direct command of their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Upon every occasion Christ reasserts that all who do not believe in him shall be eternally damned. Such infidels shall be cast "into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."<sup>183</sup> Indeed, "whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."<sup>184</sup> If all these expressions of the insane Jew are considered divine revelations, one must indeed act as Calvin did. It is only this stupid, orthodox faith by which one can explain the fact that all the reformers gave their consent to this monstrous act; that a man like Melancthon, who was by nature so soft-hearted, mild, and gentle that his contemporaries gave him the nickname, "Brother Sanftleben" ("gentle-life"), could write to Calvin that "he perfectly agrees with his judgment on Servetus, and the authorities at Geneva have done right in having this blasphemer put to death." What a horrible religious doctrine it must be that is able to make a tiger out of a lamb!

No other doctrines have ever so been put to shame by facts as the doctrine of "Christian love" and the "Christian"

<sup>183</sup>Matt. xlii: 42.

<sup>184</sup>Matt. xviii: 6.

doctrine that one must also love one's enemies. No other religion, no community of people, no social institution, ever showed less "love" for those of another faith, nor treated them more cruelly and inhumanly than did Christianity. And in spite of this, from the earliest times until the present day, people have boasted of this very "Christian love," and have tried to deceive themselves into believing in its actual existence. The so-called "Reformation" in every way increased the resulting hypocrisy. The narrow-mindedness with which they boasted of being in possession of "the absolute truth," increased their hate and contempt for all who were of a different belief, and naturally did not fail to instigate the latter to renewed attacks and bitterness.

Thus the first centuries after the introduction of the Reformation present a chain of cruelties and shocking brutalities, surpassing the most extravagant imagination. It is not our purpose to attempt to give even an approximate description of them. We wish only to remind the reader of the most important events in connection therewith, from which he can form his own opinion as to that "Christian love" of which the world is so proud.

The before-described institutions of the Reformed Church in Geneva, as founded by Calvin, formed the model for the Protestant congregations in France. Francis I. had already tried everything in his power to eradicate the Protestants. He had six heretics burned alive, and many others executed. As a demonstration against heresy he instituted a great procession, in which he, with bared head and a torch in his hand, took part, crying in a loud voice that "if he knew that one of his hands had been infested by heresy, he would cut it off with the other; nay, he would not spare his own children if they were guilty of this crime." But this same Francis also proved how much the crowned heads placed their worldly interests above their religious conscience. In spite of his religious fanaticism in his own country, he deemed it advisable to flatter the Protestant Alliance in Germany, to assist its members with money and to instigate them against their own emperor, so as to use them as confederates against his own personal enemy. He even

led them to understand that he himself inclined towards Protestantism, and went so far as to ask Melancthon to come to France and propagate his doctrine. Besides this, the Christian conscience of this pious Christian king did not prevent him uniting with the "infidel" Turks to make war on his Christian brothers in Germany.

His son, Henry II., followed in his footsteps. While following the example of his father, by assisting the Protestants in Germany, he persecuted the French Protestants with every conceivable cruelty. In the year 1549 this "Christian king" offered a spectacle to the world in comparison with which the "living torches of Nero" may be looked upon as a harmless pastime. After a splendid procession to the cathedral, the court adjourned to the Place de Greve to witness an execution which had been introduced under Francis I. Under various scaffolds a fire had been lit, over which condemned heretics were pulled up and down by chains run on pulleys. In this way the victims could be kept alive as long as was desired in order to prolong their death agonies for the amusement of the audience. And in this spectacle the Christian king and his whole court reveled, for the most barbarous means to eradicate all heretics was, according to his conviction, wholly pious and justifiable, and heresy the most detestable crime.

Wars have existed in this world as long as the human race itself, and cruelty always was one of their characteristic features. But never before in all history, whether among the crudest people of Nature or among the "heathens" of antiquity, were the battles of men distinguished by such horrible brutality as in the "Christian" religious wars. In all other wars, cruelty was looked upon, at least by the decent part of the population, as a necessary evil, but in the "Christian" religious wars the most savage cruelty was directly "commanded by God." Both parties believed themselves the sole possessors of the "absolute truth," and each of them saw in its opponents those infidels whom their Lord, Jesus Christ, had thrown into the mouth of hell, where "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Before the eyes of both parties hovered the expression of their

"Savior": "I came not to send peace, but a sword." The destruction and annihilation of the enemy was, therefore, a divine deed. The more severely one punished the "infidel" enemy the closer one followed the instructions of the Savior, who has said: "Thou, Capernaum, shalt be thrust down to hell."

The annual reports of several French cities abound in the records of atrocious cruelties that were perpetrated in the name of religion. "The Protestants robbed and plundered the Catholic churches and monasteries, destroyed the images therein and expelled and murdered the priests and monks. The Catholics were no less brutal in their actions. Whole garrisons which had surrendered were nevertheless hewn down; leaders and wealthy persons were barbarously tortured; women and maidens were raped with animal-like fury; children were torn to pieces and old men and women were slowly tortured to death. In Tours, the President was tied to a tree and his entrails torn from his body. Pregnant women were stripped, their bodies ripped open and their infants shattered on the ground or thrown to the dogs. In Castres a hangman flayed five living men and ate their livers. In Agen five hundred persons were hanged; at Cahors almost as many were burned alive. In Troyes a procurator had his own son hanged. A brother had his sister burned at the stake, and before the fire was lit had seething fat poured over her skin. In the whole of the province nothing was heard but the most shameful tales of murder and devilish cruelties. More than fifteen hundred persons were tortured to death, blinded, strung up by their hands or feet, dragged at horses' tails, stoned, thrown into seething lime or buried alive."

People boasted of these horrors with actual pride and vied with one another in practicing the most refined cruelties, for was it not all done in honor of "our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ"? The Paris Parliament declared all reformed persons outlawed, and exhorted the Catholics to arm themselves and kill them. This proclamation was read by the priests in the churches every Sunday. The reformed party perpetrated the same horrible cruelties against

the Catholics, particularly against the priests, many of whom were tortured, mutilated and even put to death. One of their leaders made a necklace for himself of monks' ears.

Our pen almost refuses to remind the reader of an event which is unique in history; an event, the bare mention of which makes us shudder and tremble; an event that will for all time to come be a blot on the human race—St. Bartholomew's night. The most frightful battles seem harmless child's play compared with the atrocities committed during that night. Every fight between men, no matter how brutal, gives the opponent a chance to defend himself; but here it was murder—murder such as the world had never before seen, a massacre beyond compare. To murder defenseless human beings in their sleep! To treacherously slaughter ten thousands of "Christian brethren"! To wade in the blood of one's fellowmen! What a wild, degenerate rabble they must have been who could perpetrate such a horrible crime! How depraved and brutalized must the dregs of humanity have been to show their brutality in such a way! Oh! Is it conceivable? Is it possible? It was not the dregs of the people who reveled in the blood of their fellowmen? It was not the meanest mob in the world, in whose brain this fiendish crime was planned? Could you blame the youth of today if they called historians "miserable liars" when these tell them that it was "the most Christian king" who commanded this monstrous crime, and that it was the highest nobility, the elite of the country, who committed these horrible deeds? And still this is the truth! The ruler of the country, the father of the people, had his subjects murdered in their sleep because their faith differed from his own. But this is not all! The fundamental laws of Nature seemed overturned by the faith of religion. A woman! Not one of those degenerate creatures like the mistresses of the French kings; no, a woman of the highest rank, the mother of "the most Christian king," Catherine de Medici, born of a family of the highest Italian nobility; she it was who planned this mon-



strous crime; in her brain originated the greatest crime ever committed on earth.

It really was as though Nature itself had conspired against the simplest rules of decency. On the day after that horrible night you could have seen the noble ladies and gentlemen of the court going through the streets filled with corpses, to enjoy the sight of this heinous outrage. The Queen Mother and her ladies in waiting stopped at the corpse of a nobleman and were not ashamed to make indecent remarks, accompanied by loud laughter. The king, with his escort, went through the bloodstained streets as though to admire the decorations for a general festivity.

For three days murder raged in the city. But the order of the king was not confined to Paris; it had been sent to all the provinces of the empire, so that the total number of murdered persons is estimated at from 50,000 to 100,000.

It is hardly possible, today, in spite of the most detailed description of the facts, to form an idea of the actual character of this fiendish crime. It was not, as might be imagined, the case of a nightly attack on the enemy, or anything like an execution. The victims in question were mostly people, to whom the king had professed personal friendship; they were the wedding guests of his own sister.

If it were possible to surpass this horrible outrage in any way, this was done by the manner in which the tidings of it were received in Catholic circles. Philip II. of Spain was greatly delighted, and it is said that this is the only occasion upon which he ever laughed in his life. In Madrid there was general rejoicing, and this murderous deed was celebrated by festivities as though a great victory had been won. Pope Gregory held a thanksgiving service in the church, had cannon fired, bonfires lighted, and at his own expense had a special medal coined as a souvenir of the "Massacre of the Huguenots," and a painting made for the glorification of the "Murder of Coligny." The former bore the inscription, "Hugonotorum strages," the latter "Pontifex Colignii necem probat."

All this sounds so incredible that one scarcely believes one's self dealing with events of recent centuries, but

rather with mythological tales like the Titanic wars of the Greek Gods or their like. In these events one misses all signs of normal human nature; psychology is almost at sea in these unnatural emotions, which are absolutely foreign to a normal condition of the human mind. For, shall all those who lived in the sixteenth century, particularly the kings and princes, be considered "born criminals"? Can it be believed that the human mind has so changed in the last four centuries, that we look in vain in those figures for the truly human element? No! Mankind has remained the same; it can not change so quickly. What has changed is the environment, and especially the orthodox religious faith. Again we must find an excuse for the atrocities of men in this very faith; it must reconcile us to the caricatures it has made of normal human beings.

Very well! We will gladly accept this excuse, we will gladly believe that it was not the true nature of the people that made them rejoice and be merry when they learned that a hundred thousand of their human brethren had been foully murdered; we will gladly believe that the king, as well as his mother, were convinced that they performed a pious deed by annihilating those heretics. But, if we accept this religious faith as the excuse for the most atrocious crime the world has ever witnessed, must we not then condemn this faith? Is it not then time to admit that nothing else has been such a curse to the world, nothing else been so pernicious to mankind, as this miserable Christianity?

But if we do accept the orthodox Christian faith as an excuse for the long, uninterrupted chain of frightful outrages, how can we, on the other hand, with this assumption, reconcile the fact that all Christian rulers, the emperors, kings, and princes, who, as Luther teaches, were the instruments of God; that the "representatives of Christ"—the popes, and all the great reformers of the sixteenth century, understood how to circumvent this same orthodox faith whenever it was to their personal advantage to do so, and any political interests, of whatsoever nature, were at issue? In making a psychological analysis of those historical events, we are always in doubt as to what is

more despicable, the narrow-mindedness with which that ridiculous orthodox faith was embraced, or the wickedness with which this faith was utilized for egotistic purposes.

Thus, the popes never hesitated to give dispensation, or to release from sacred vows, if the protection of their own interests demanded it. Pope Clement VII. absolved Francis I. from his oath given to Charles V. as a prisoner, because he needed him as a confederate for his own selfish ends.

The Bourbons supported the Protestants of other countries and made them their confederates, not only against the German emperor, but also against the dangerous power of the Guises. Thus they persecuted and murdered in their own country the same religious party with which they united against those of their own faith, for political reasons, in foreign countries.

At the Diet of Speyer the Protestant princes refused to give the emperor their support against the Turks and Frenchmen until their selfish demands had been complied with. In all German religious wars personal greed and the desire to obtain material possessions always were at the end proven to have been the moving cause. The thirty years' war, which began as a religious war, in which the different parties fought fanatically in defense of their faith, finally became the roughest kind of a tussle for possession, and the Westphalian negotiations of peace are nothing but a great chaffer for lands and honors.

The motive of personal and political interest is nowhere else so evident as in the English "Reformation."

Henry VIII., at the beginning of his reign, was the most zealous defender of the Apostolic See, for which the "Holy Father" gave him the title, "Defender of the Faith." All reformatory writings which were brought from the continent to England were burned by order of the king. Luther's articles were strictly forbidden, and, as has already been mentioned, the king, himself, published a book against Luther's doctrine. In view of the combined opposition shown by the king, the nobility, and the priesthood, to the

Protestant doctrine, it seemed as if England would remain one of the strongest pillars of the Popedom.

But here a personal interest stepped in, an interest that was to become the cause of the English Reformation. Henry VII., on the death of his eldest son, Arthur, had managed to get a dispensation from Pope Julius II., which enabled Henry, Prince of Wales at that time, also in wedlock to become the successor of his brother. Through this, the rich dowry of the Spanish princess and the desirable relationship with the Spanish royal family were to be retained by his house. In this way Catherine of Aragon became the wife of Henry VIII., with whom she spent many years of happy married life.

Whoever is desirous of getting at the bottom of the naked truth of the historical events which led to the Reformation in England, should bear the following facts in mind:

On the thirty-first of January, 1510, therefore, seven months after her marriage, Catherine gave birth to a still-born daughter. On the first of January, 1511, she bore a son, who died a few days afterward. In September, 1513, she gave birth to a still-born son, and in June 1514, to another son, who also died shortly after his birth. In 1515 she had a miscarriage.

In view of the enormous importance of having an heir for the English throne, all imaginable precautions were taken to insure Catherine's giving birth to a living son. Not only the most distinguished English physicians were consulted, but others from Spain were brought to England to give their advice. These efforts were finally crowned with success. On the 18th of February, 1516, Princess Mary, later the queen called "Bloody Mary," was born.

But the difficulty about an heir to the throne was not solved by this. According to the laws of the time, female descendants could not occupy the throne. Henry feared that if he had no descendants but Mary, England would fall into a condition of the most frightful anarchy. No queen had ever sat on the English throne, with but one exception, and this exception was a sufficient warning to avoid a repetition most energetically. Mathilda had had

the same pretensions as Mary, and her attempt to gain her rights by force plunged England into anarchy and a bloody civil war that lasted nineteen years. Henry, therefore, did not give up hope of a male heir, and all precautions known to science at that time were brought into requisition. Nevertheless, all efforts were in vain. In the year 1517 Catherine had a premature birth, and in 1518 again a dead child was born to her. How many miscarriages took place in the next few years can not exactly be ascertained; at any rate, Catherine did not have another living child. In 1525, in her fortieth year, she entered her menopause, and with that all further prospects of having children were ended.

Henry VIII. regarded this failure to produce male heirs, which he considered the greatest misfortune to his country, as a punishment of God upon his marriage with his brother's widow. He therefore claimed that the pope at the time had had no right to issue a dispensation for this marriage, since the same had been expressly forbidden by God, when he said to Moses: "If a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing; he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless."<sup>185</sup> He thereupon asked the pope to recall the dispensation given by his predecessor and to declare the marriage with Catherine null and void, so that he could marry again, this time, Anne Boleyn, with whom he had already been living in sexual intercourse for some time. This is the well-known divorce controversy between the king and the pope which led to England's separation from the Catholic Church, or, as it is generally called, to the "Reformation."

From the viewpoint of the medical science of today, we are compelled to give a very different version of the state of affairs than the one given by King Henry. We see in the long chain of miscarriages, premature births, and still-born children not God's punishment for a broken law given by him to Moses, but the typical result of a sexual disease, that of syphilis. Every physician knows that these are the characteristic signs of former syphilis. That Henry VIII.

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<sup>185</sup>Lev. xx: 21.

may have contracted this disease in his youth is quite in accordance with the debauched life he always led. Catherine was not the only one who was "punished" with still-born children and miscarriages. Of his many mistresses, only one illegitimate son is known to have survived. Anne of Boleyn, who it is true bore one living daughter, the later Queen Elizabeth, also had many miscarriages.

How often small causes bring about great results! Here, to the syphilis of one man, the "Reformation" of a whole country is due. And through what streams of blood English history had to wade in consequence of her "reformatory" tendencies!

Very well, then! Whether through the "punishment of God" or because of former syphilis, Henry had no male descendants and therefore wanted to have his marriage with Catherine annulled. Pope Clement VII. refused! What! Did the Holy Father have qualms of conscience? Did he recoil from the idea of declaring a dispensation issued by his predecessor null and void? This is scarcely to be believed of a pope who absolved a king (Francis I.) from the sacred oath he had given to an emperor, because he needed him as a confederate. Not only that! The Duke of Suffolk found himself exactly in the same position that Henry, his brother-in-law, was in now. He had married a blood-relation, and had received a dispensation from the pope permitting him to do so. When he tired of this marriage and desired to contract one elsewhere, his conscience smote him too, for having contracted a marriage prohibited by God. He therefore had the dispensation annulled, thereby making the marriage null and void, married the choice of his heart, and at her death entered the holy state of matrimony with the sister of the king. On the 12th of May, 1528, Pope Clement VII. issued a bull in which he threatened all who in any way cast a doubt upon the validity of the future marriages of the duke.

This case is absolutely identical with that of the king, and still the pope refused to annul the marriage with Catherine. Had age made his conscience more sensitive? Ah, no! The pope did not bother about such trifles as

qualms of conscience. The poor man found himself in a difficult dilemma; he was between two fires. He would gladly have acceded to the king's wishes, but, unfortunately for him, Catherine of Aragon was not only the wife of Henry VIII., but was also the aunt of Charles V., and with the same vehemence with which the King of England demanded the annulment of the marriage, the Emperor of Germany opposed such a step.

In this predicament the pope tried everything in his power to dissuade Henry from his purpose. The difficult problem in question was to secure the succession to the throne without annulling the marriage with Catherine. Again, Catherine's daughter Mary was suggested as successor to the throne. But the obstacle here was her eventual marriage. If she remained unmarried there would be no heir to the throne at her death. If she married an Englishman, disturbances were to be anticipated, similar to those which led to the "War of the Roses." If she married a foreigner, the much-feared foreign influence was to be expected.

Here, the Cardinals Campeggio and Woolsey suggested a way out of the quandary, to which the Holy Father, too, agreed. Henry VIII. had an illegitimate son, whom he had made "Duke of Richmond and Somerset," "High Admiral of England," "Lord Warden of the Marches," and "Lord Lieutenant of Ireland." This son of Henry was to be married to his half-sister Mary, so as to set this worthy brother and sister on the English throne. And the pope declared himself willing to give the dispensation necessary to the consummation of this marriage. Is it not touching to think of all a pope is willing to do for the flock entrusted to his keeping?

But Henry VIII. could not reconcile himself to the idea of marrying his two children to each other. Maybe his ardent desire to marry Anne of Boleyn was the principal factor of his objection to this advice. He insisted on the annulment of his marriage with Catherine, and, when the pope still refused to accede to his wish, he put

an end to his trouble by kicking the pope out and putting himself in his place. This is the English "Reformation."

By the removal of the papal power from England the power and importance of the crown grew to a dazzling height. Henceforth the king was absolute ruler over his subjects, not only in secular matters, but in religious affairs as well. The divine respect paid to the Roman emperors after their death was now given to the king during his lifetime. The sequestration of all the Church property, the dissolution of the monasteries and the confiscation of their property, filled the royal coffers with immeasurable wealth. The power of the king was unlimited. Michelet says of him: "The new Messiah is the king." From this time forth the bishops had to pay homage to the royal master alone and take the oath of obedience to him. The royal right of supremacy was extended even over the faith and form of religious worship. The people were taught by quotations from the Bible, by means of which anything can be proven, that absolute power, in secular as well as ecclesiastical matters, belonged to the king; that he was ordained to rule the Church and the State in place of God; "what the soul is in the body and the sun in the universe, that is the king in the kingdom, God's image on earth." To the official title of the king the words were added: "Supreme head on earth of the Church of England, immediately after God."

The violence which the king exercised over the conscience of the people has no equal in history. Woe to the presumptuous one who was not ready to swear to the invalidity of the first and the validity of the second marriage, who would not admit that the king was the legitimate head of the Church and the Roman primacy a usurped power. The honorable bishop, John Fisher of Rochester, who had been considered the "pride of the English clergy," was accused of high treason because he would not declare the marriage with Catherine unlawful according to the Holy Scriptures. To save him, the pope made him a cardinal. Aroused by this act to even greater anger, the king cried out: "Paul may send him the cardinal's hat, but I will see to it that he has no head on which to wear the hat." The



bishop was executed and his head exhibited on London bridge. Three weeks later his friend, Thomas More, who shared his views, suffered the same fate. He had said that "no secular power was entitled to usurp the supreme sovereignty of the Church, which Christ had given the Apostle Peter and his successors in the Apostolic See." He, too, was executed, and this they called "REFORMATION." All that this so-called "Reformation" amounted to was that Henry VIII. put his own person in the place of the pope and put the proceeds of the dissolved monasteries into his own pockets.

As to the religious creed, as well as the sacraments and ceremonies, Henry VIII. allowed the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church to remain unchanged. There was, however, a party in England that tried to introduce the Protestant innovations into the country, but the greater their zeal for the new doctrine, the more stubbornly did the king oppose them.

Following their example and master, Martin Luther, the Protestants execrated everything that did not correspond to their doctrine, in the most malignant terms. Everything that had been most sacred to Catholics heretofore was derided and scorned by them, and the whole Roman doctrine was called a product of hell. The sacrament of mass was ridiculed. The doctrine of transubstantiation, which had been reverently respected, was made ridiculous in comic articles and farces. When a priest once lifted the host in a church, a Protestant lawyer held up a dog. The most sacred words of the old ritual, the formula of confirmation: "Hoc est corpus," were burlesqued by the words, "Hocus pocus."

This blasphemy so aroused the anger of Henry that he established that rule of faith, consisting of six articles, "that hovered like a finely sharpened sword over all heads," so that the people called it "the statute of the six blood-articles." They declared: "That the doctrine of the transformation of the substance in the sacrament would also be acknowledged in the future, and the communion-cup be withheld from the laity. That the marriage of priests, after

their consecration was, according to the divine commandments, forbidden, the vows of the orders retained their binding force even after the dissolution of the monasteries; private masses were not against the words of the Holy Scriptures and acted as a comfort to the soul; oral confession was useful and necessary."

Therefore, everything was expressly ordered to remain as it was, and every innovation decidedly rejected. "Whoever impugns these doctrines, by word or deed, becomes guilty of heresy and has forfeited his life." Whoever denied transubstantiation was condemned to the flames. The refusal to go to confession or to attend mass was punished as a "felony." And this they called "Reformation"!

The preacher, Lambert, who expressed a leaning towards Zwingli's doctrine regarding the communion, had to appear before an ecclesiastical commission, under the king's personal presidency, and submit to a "colloquium," and when, exhausted by the long arguments, held with him by Cranmer and several other bishops, he finally declared that he threw himself entirely on the mercy of the king, the latter sentenced him to death at the stake, because he did not wish to be a "protector of heresy."

"Papists" and "Lutheran" heretics were persecuted with equal zeal by the English "reformed" party. In July of the year 1540 Henry VIII. celebrated his triumph over the State and the Church by a symbolical spectacle on the Thames. A year later three "Papists" and three "Lutheran heretics" were led, bound together two by two, to the place of execution and burned at the stake. And this they called "Reformation"!

Nevertheless, the Protestant party succeeded even during Henry's lifetime in obtaining some recognition of its doctrines. The antipathy of the king toward the papists, which induced him to form a "Christian League" with the German princes, helped to bring this about. He acceded to the importunities of Cranmer to change the mass into a communion service. Today such a change may appear a matter of indifference, but at that time it was important enough to condemn to death all those who did not submit

to it. Thus, for refusing to recognize this change the Duke of Norfolk was thrown into the Tower, and his son, the Count of Surrey, beheaded on the scaffold.

In spite of the many marriages consummated by Henry VIII., which were made possible by the execution of two of his wives, this "Representative of Christ on earth," for reasons given above, left only three legitimate children. His son, who under the name of Edward VI. ascended the throne after the death of his father, was at that time only nine years old. Lord Hertford, who under the title of "Protector" assumed the government in place of the young king, lacked the force and authority of Henry VIII. to place his own person above all parties. He needed the support of a party and therefore united with the Protestants. Cranmer could now openly assert his break with the old Church system, so that, as one of his contemporaries reports, something terrible happened, something "that had never been equaled since Christianity was introduced into England"—"the Archbishop of Canterbury publicly ate meat during Lent in the 'Hall of Lambeth.'" And, in spite of this, the earth did not drop out of its orbit!

Henry's six articles of faith were withdrawn. Upon the king's command all images were removed from the churches; the priests received permission to marry; instead of mass, communion was held; an English prayer-book was used in place of the "Missal" and "Breviary."

These startling innovations were now carried out with the same zeal and despotism with which they had formerly been suppressed. Whoever in the slightest degree opposed them was thrown into prison or put to death. Gardiner, who considered the introduction of these ecclesiastical innovations during the minority of the king illegal, was thrown into the Tower. Likewise all the prelates who remained loyal to the old traditions were expelled from their offices and thrown into prison. The most sensational demonstration against the mass was the devastation of the stone altars and the erection of wooden platforms in the middle of the church. Forty-two articles of faith were

set up, thirty-nine of which, up to the present day, form the standard of the Anglican Church.

The intolerance with which the people were forced to accept the new faith remained the same as it had always been from the beginning of the Christian Church. Every offense against the adopted articles of faith had to be expiated by the severest penances, the severest of which was, here too, excommunication, through which the offender was robbed of every mercy of God and given over to the eternal cause of the devil. And this they called "REFORMATION."

Edward VI., a weak, sickly boy, died at the age of fifteen. After the deadliest battles, which were also fought for religious considerations, the vain attempt being made to place Lady Jane Grey, who belonged to the Protestant party, on the throne, the oldest daughter of Henry VIII., Mary, became queen.

With Mary's accession to the throne English history found itself face to face with a peculiar alternative, namely: Either to admit that a king guilty of bigamy sat on the English throne, or to allow it to be said that the English crown rested on the head of an illegitimately born woman. For either the relationship of Henry VIII. with Catherine of Aragon was that of lawful wedlock, in which case Henry was a bigamist, who, during his wife's life, contracted another marriage, or this relationship, as Henry for religious reasons claimed, was no marriage, consequently making Mary an illegitimate child.

Of course, Mary preferred to consider her father a bigamist rather than admit herself a bastard. Consequently she naturally sympathized with that party that had been opposed to declaring her mother's marriage invalid, that is, with the Catholics. Mary, therefore, became the most zealous adherent of the pope and stopped at no measure, no matter how barbarous or cruel, to re-establish Catholicism in England. She began her reign by having Lady Jane Grey and her husband beheaded. The Duke of Northumberland was likewise put to death for having been the instigator of the movement to put Lady Jane Grey on the

throne. During Mary's reign the fires of the stake blazed from one end of the country to the other. Because of her inhuman cruelty, history has conferred on her the honorary title, "Bloody Mary." What depraved beasts fanatical religious faith was able to make of women! More than two hundred of the most prominent men and women in England she sentenced to death at the stake. John Rogers; John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester; Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London; Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester; Cranmer, the leader of the Church under Henry VIII., and Rowland Taylor were among her victims.

The five years of this woman's reign constitute the most indelibly execrable blot on the history of man. The fanaticism and cruelty with which innocent men and women were tortured and put to death are too abominable to be worthy of a more detailed description. On the other hand, we can only shake our heads in astonishment, today, at the narrow-mindedness with which those "heroes" became "martyrs," preferring to die at the stake rather than deviate even an iota from their orthodox faith. Here, as everywhere else in the history of Christianity, we find, side by side, those two products of religious faith: Inhuman cruelty and incredible stupidity.

After Mary's death her half-sister, Elizabeth, came to the throne. She was a daughter of Anne of Boleyn. The same motive that actuated Mary to declare her father's marriage to Catherine of Aragon valid impelled Elizabeth to pronounce it invalid. With the same necessity with which Mary adhered to the Catholic party, Elizabeth belonged to the Protestants. So the people were ordered again to change their faith. Just as women change the style of their garments with every new fashion, so the English nation had to change its faith with every new occupant of the throne. With the same strictness with which Catholicism had been propagated during Mary's reign, Protestantism was now re-established under Elizabeth. All priests, under penalty of life-imprisonment, were commanded to use the Anglican prayer-book. Whoever refused to attend Church on every Sunday and holiday, was sub-

jected to the severest punishment. Whoever in any way rebelled against the state-religion was considered a traitor. A particular Court of Justice was instituted to watch that these laws were obeyed. Any one who clung to the Catholic faith was heavily punished. More than two hundred priests were sentenced to death. And this was called "REFORMATION."

While the Catholics recognized in the person of the pope the infallible supreme authority, and consequently represented an inseverable entity during these many centuries, the Protestants distinguished themselves, from their first appearance, by continual disagreements, leading to constant ruptures and formations of new sects. In itself this would not have been a misfortune. On the contrary, this seems to show more independent thought, a freedom from the slavish compulsion of faith exercised by former Christianity. This, however, is not so. This would have been the case only if every one had been free to choose his faith, and if no sect had been prevented from exercising its religious observances. But this was far from being the case. Every country had its own religion, to belong to which was every citizen's duty. An offense against religion was considered identical with a crime against the authority of the state and was punished as high treason. Sects of a different faith were brutally suppressed. The severest penalties were inflicted on those who, by word or deed, deviated ever so little from the religion prescribed by the state. At the same time, the various sects, among themselves, gave evidence of the highest degree of intolerance. Every one of them believed that it alone was in possession of the "absolute truth," and looked down with hatred and contempt on all other Christians.

To describe in this place the gruesome wars, the cruel persecutions, the horrible sufferings and agonies, which "reformed Christianity" inflicted on its fellowmen, is impossible. We are hardly able briefly to refer to them.

Just as every violent revolution of the people is followed by a severe reaction on the part of the government, so it was after the execution of Charles I. Under the reign of

Charles II. the same strictness and cruelty was again practiced against all who did not wish to adopt the prescribed religion of the country. The Episcopal service was introduced and the "Nonconformists" and "Dissenters" suffered severely. Among these were the Presbyterians, the Independents or Congregationalists, the Baptists, and the "Society of Friends" or "Quakers." More than two thousand ministers were deprived of their positions in one day, and driven with wives and children into exile. These "martyrs" held their divine services in forbidden places, in caves, and ravines, where, like the first Christians in the Roman Empire, they tried to evade the persecutions of the government. Under the reign of Charles II. eight thousand dissenters died in the prisons, which were nothing but miserable, dark holes, breeding-places for vermin and disease.

But the poor Quakers had to endure more than any others. They were thrown into prison by the thousands, their property confiscated. In their despair, these loyal adherents to their convictions tried to escape their fate by leaving their country and seeking to found a new home in a strange land. The first exiles of this sect were two women, Mary Fisher and Ann Austin. They landed at the harbor in Boston in July, 1656. As soon as the Puritanical inhabitants learned of their arrival, the poor, innocent women were sent back in the same ship that brought them, to England, where a hard fate awaited them. At the same time the strictest laws were enacted to prevent the immigration of Christians of another creed. But the Quakers, of whom there were a large number, were not to be deterred by this from seeking their fortunes in the new world. Large numbers landed and converted many citizens to their own faith. Hereupon a fury arose among the American colonists against them far greater than the fanaticism practiced in England. The peaceable "Friends" were treated with the greatest cruelty, and many of them met their death on the gallows. The New England Puritans evinced a brutality towards their innocent, persecuted fellowmen, the bare description of which makes one's hair stand on end. They were robbed of their possessions, were thrown into

miserable prisons, where under fiendish tortures of starvation and disease they perished. Their ears were cut off, their tongues pierced with red-hot irons. Men and women were whipped, naked, through the streets and dragged from one city to another in the New England States. Every citizen who gave the Quakers the slightest assistance, did so under the penalty of the severest punishment. And all this was done because of religious faith; for the Quakers were peace-loving, moral people, who harmed no one.

The religious fanaticism and superstition of the Puritans in New England knew no limits. The trials against witchcraft and sorcery lasted until the end of the seventeenth century, costing innumerable lives. No one could know whether his turn or that of his nearest relative might not come on the morrow. To be accused by an enemy or envious person of witchcraft, was tantamount to a death-sentence. The fate of the unfortunate Stephen Burrows may serve as an illustration of the many atrocities characteristic of the superstition of that time.

Stephen Burrows was a minister in Salem, unusually beloved by his congregation. Besides his personal amiability and religious disposition he was possessed of great physical strength, by means of which he often aroused the admiration of his friends. Another minister, called Parris, was filled with envy when he heard of the devotion given by his congregation to Burrows. In his hatred he accused Burrows of witchcraft, claiming that no one could attain such physical strength in a natural way. Therefore, one fine day, Stephen Burrows received the accusation with the order to immediately appear before the tribunal to defend himself against the charges brought against him. He laughed when he received the summons, and cheerfully bade farewell to his wife and child, being convinced of his innocence. Nevertheless, his family never saw him again. He was sentenced to death and mercilessly executed. At the place of execution he made such a touching address to the people that all eyes were filled with tears. But the representative of the tribunal, Cotton Mather, rode about among



the people, reminding them that Satan himself often assumed the guise of an angel to deceive the people.

If we sum up the results of the foregoing discourse on the "Reformation" and its consequences, we must arrive at the following conclusion: The reformers of the sixteenth century were forced to segregate themselves from the Pope-dom by the frightful abuses and debaucheries of which the clergy were guilty at that time. The religious congregations that had made themselves independent of the pope were free of those abuses, and, so far as this is concerned, the break with the pope may be called a "Reformation."

But in the matter of religious faith, Catholicism, by upholding the doctrine of tradition, the infallibility of the pope, and the power of the councils, was capable of development. The possibility of progress, the possibility of a true "Reformation" in the domain of faith, was thereby assured. Protestantism, on the contrary, which clung to the literal faith in the Gospel, which declared the Gospel a revelation from God and everything else inadmissible, was incapable of any further development. Its faith had to remain unchanged for all time to come, without permitting any "reformation." In this respect the Reformation was rather a step backward than one in advance.

From its very incipency, the Reformation led to disagreements and the formation of many sects, which differed more or less from one another in their articles of faith.

The violence with which the faith was forced upon its subjects by the government was far more severe among the Protestants than among the Catholics. The latter were concerned only with maintaining the unity of the Church, while the former were actuated by genuine fanatical belief. For this reason religious coercion is, even in our present day, much stricter in Protestant than in Catholic countries.

The rupture in the Church and the formation of any number of sects led to the deadliest religious wars, which lasted for centuries. The different sects hated and cursed one another as only the bitterest enemies could do. Every one of the different sects believed itself in the sole possession of "absolute truths," and looked upon all the rest of Chris-

tendom as a product of hell. The atrocities and cruelty with which the Christian congregations persecuted one another were so horrible and barbarous that it hardly seems possible today that human beings should have been such beasts. And still, fanatic religious faith was able to accomplish this. In the zealous desire to extirpate all those of a different faith, the most horrible measures were used. The Catholics formed a particular society, the Jesuits, whose members openly admitted that every expedient was considered sacred by them, when it was a question of converting or extirpating "heretics."

The historical "Reformation," therefore, has eventuated only in advancing coercion of personal faith and increasing the cruel persecutions and terrible religious wars. There could be actual "reform" in the domain of religion only when people were no longer compelled by brutal force to accept a certain faith, and when they were no longer persecuted because of their faith. Just as the storms and darkness of a long winter night are at last dispelled by the first blush of the dawn, the golden rays of rising aurora shedding their glowing light over the firmament, so, after the gloom and melancholy of the most horrible and fanatical religious wars, a bright genius arises on the horizon of history, far in advance of his time, replacing religious superstition with human intelligence—Frederick the Great. There is hardly another man in history who so well deserves the title of "The Great," as this great king. But why? Because of the battles he won? Indeed not! There have been other, perhaps, greater generals than he. Frederick also lost battles, and those he won he owes partly to his excellent generals. Frederick would have been a "great" man even without bloody wars.

His real greatness lay in that wisdom and chivalrous spirit which carried him centuries ahead of his time. Before his keen intelligence all the twaddle of the priests amounted to nothing. He had his own philosophical view of life and allowed no one to thrust a religious faith upon him. The freedom of thought which he demanded for himself he was willing to grant to everybody else, even to the

lowest beggar in his country. He opened his gates to all religious refugees and would not permit any one to be disturbed or influenced in his religious faith. In this spirit he uttered the famous words: "In my country every person can attain salvation after his own fashion." This was a mighty step in advance in the civilization of mankind. Many deadly battles had still to be fought before this humane principle was recognized by the rest of the world. Gradually, however, intelligence was bound to triumph over superstition. The nations at last succeeded in shaking off the frightful yoke of religious coercion, and admitting the principle that every person should be master of his own faith. In this we must recognize the real "Reformation"; not in the stupid, orthodox doctrine of Martin Luther nor in the intolerant constraint in the matter of religion practiced by the other great "Reformers."

## XI. CHRISTIANITY OF THE PRESENT.

### 1. THE FAITH OF MODERN CHRISTIANITY.

Originally the word "civilization," which is derived from "civis," the "citizen," was applied only to the public affairs of a commonwealth. Accordingly, persons who lived in orderly states were called "civilized," in distinction from the wild nations to whom the administrative and social mechanism of states was still unknown. But during the course of time the meaning of the word has changed. By civilization we, today, mean the striving after perfection, alike in the public affairs of the commonwealth and in the mental and physical development of the single individual. Of course, it will always be a "striving"; for "perfection" does not exist in reality and can, therefore, represent only the ideal, toward which we strive.

But this ideal, too, has, in the course of centuries, been subject to constant change. What at one period of history was considered an ideal constitution of a commonwealth, was at others looked upon as dangerous and deleterious. In the same way, ideas regarding the ethics and morals of individuals have always varied during the different periods of history.

In spite of all differences of opinion, there is scarcely any one who doubts the fact that we, today, have attained to a higher degree of civilization than any of which any nation of the past can boast. In every sphere of human endeavor, in all branches of art and science, mankind has risen to a height never dreamed of hitherto. Our ethics, too, though there is still room for greater development and improvement, stand on a far higher plane than had ever been the case in by-gone times. It is true, the idea of ethics is mainly conventional, and it is therefore hardly

possible to lay down general rules regarding their nature. But there are certain things which form an integral part of that which we can call ethics, about which there can hardly be a difference of opinion. Who would hesitate to consider sympathy with one's fellowmen and consideration of them an important factor in ethics? Who, on the other hand, would not stamp indifference to the sufferings or joy of one's fellowmen as a sign of exceedingly low ethics? No one can deny that just in this domain we have made great progress. If we think of the cruelties practiced during former centuries, it seems hardly credible that there ever should have been human beings capable of such savagery. The mere thought of burning fellow-human beings alive makes us shudder, and in the depth of our hearts our self-respect is offended because such a thing could be done by beings like ourselves. And still, it is not so many years ago that such bestialities were not only practiced, but that, for instance, at the Auto-da-Fé, they were made a public festival, in which the king and the ladies of the court took part. Human beings were tortured, imprisoned, and burned at the stake for things which today are not even considered wrong, far less criminal. We still have capital punishment today, but it is used only in cases of premeditated murder, and, even then, we try to make death for the criminal as easy as possible, above all else trying to avoid inflicting pain; while in former times all possible crimes had to be expiated by death, frequently intensified by preceding torture, by mutilation, the rack, pinching with red-hot irons, or such like. For lesser offenses, parts of the body, such as the ears, the tongue, the arms, or hands, were cut off, or the eyes were pierced. Today criminals are far better cared for in prisons than slaves or serfs, who by the severest labor had to earn their living, were treated in former times.

There can be no doubt that the civilization of today stands on a far higher plane than at any other epoch in history. The question of interest to us is whether Christianity has had any influence on the progress of civilization, and if that be the case, of what nature it has been.

The general inclination is to ascribe to Christianity an important part in this progress ; some even going so far as to claim that we owe our civilization altogether to Christianity. We speak today of "Christian civilization," taking for granted that this civilization is a product of Christianity. It is true that the civilization here in question is the civilization of Christian nations. But this does not prove that it is the result of Christianity.

The answer to this question has already been given in the foregoing chapters, in which it has been demonstrated what a "blessing" Christianity has been to mankind. We have seen how Christianity has zealously prevented every progressive step in science. Men who said or taught anything that did not agree with the Bible, were imprisoned, tortured, or burned at the stake. Galileo had to expiate bitterly the fact that the earth turns about the sun. Mankind was forcibly kept in a state of ignorance and stupidity. Art was loaded with the chains of Christian superstition. There is something exceedingly pathetic in viewing the art treasures in European galleries. For centuries the greatest geniuses of all countries produced nothing but again and again the one subject, the life and the passion of Christ.

It was inevitable that Christianity should exercise the most pernicious influence on the ethics of mankind. How could an elevation of the human soul be thought of in the face of the smouldering fires of the stakes and all the dark chambers of horrors? The swindle in indulgences, by means of which people could buy absolution even for crimes to be committed, was a direct inducement to crime. The Tribunal of the Inquisition, which raged for centuries, made of mankind a race of hypocrites.

Many historians credit the Reformation with the principal merit in the rise of civilization. Of what nature was this merit has been clearly set forth in the chapter on the "Reformation." The fact is, that the two centuries immediately following the Reformation are as foreign and incomprehensible to our present civilization as though thousands of years intervened between them and now. Can we form an idea today of the awful religious wars to which

the Reformation gave rise? Can we today understand how human beings could kill each other by the thousands, because of the question whether the communion is to be taken in one form or in both? Can we deem it credible, today, that hundreds of thousands of persons were burned alive for practicing witchcraft? Can we call people civilized who, because of their faith, mutually mutilated, persecuted, despised, and abused one another?

Religious constraint was even worse in Evangelical countries, if that were possible, than among the Catholics. No one dared to express an opinion, if it deviated ever so little from the prescribed faith. How, under such conditions, could there be a question of civilization? The results of that orthodox religious constraint are to be seen even today in the bigotry and hypocrisy in certain Evangelical countries.

No! The Reformation has had no share in the enormous progress of civilization. On the contrary, this owes its origin to religious liberty—which nations won for themselves by terrible wars and revolutions. From the time that people were no longer forced into religious belief, when everybody was allowed liberty of thought, when no one was compelled to go to church and bother about religious matters, when the Church became entirely separated from the state, from that time dates our modern civilization, which then advanced with dazzling rapidity. As a bird after long confinement in a cage at last is set at liberty and boldly flies aloft in the blue ether, so the human race raised itself to a glorious height after freeing itself from nearly 2,000 years' imprisonment in the dungeons of religious superstition. Like a hideous nightmare lay Christianity on poor, abused mankind, holding it prisoner in the deathly sleep of the dark Middle Ages and in the bonds of orthodox religious constraint. It is the deliverance from this cruel Christianity which enabled mankind to develop at last, to cultivate art and science, to pursue purely human ideals, and thereby found a new humane civilization.

Deliverance from Christianity, do we say? If this be

so, how does it happen, that, in spite of all this, Christianity still exists, and will continue to exist? Christianity has not been put out of the world, but people are no longer forced to recognize it. It continues to exist, but every one can choose for himself how much or how little he wishes to be influenced by it. The generally prevailing opinion is that this—one might say—optional Christianity is the most essential factor of our civilization, even that we owe our civilization to it.

Thus we arrive at the most important question whether this is really the case, whether Christianity is a *conditio sine qua non* of our civilization. To properly appreciate this question, it is necessary above all things to have a clear conception of what Christianity really is. This is by no means an idle suggestion; for just at the present time there is a strong inclination to ascribe to it quite a different meaning from that belonging to it according to its historical origin. People, in this respect, often go so far as to make "good" and "Christian," "wicked" and "un-Christian" synonymous terms. If a person lays his hand on his heart and says, "I am a 'Christian,'" he means to say that he is a good, respectable man, who would wrong no one; while, on the other hand, if a person is guilty of any evil action, he is often reproached with having committed an "un-Christian" deed. In doing this, one presupposes what still remains to be proved.

The concept of Christianity can not change; it must be the same today as it was nearly two thousand years ago, at its very beginning. What has changed so frequently, in the course of history, is not the concept itself, but the application of this concept to practical life. The concept of Christianity is faith in the "Savior," in Christ, the "Son of God," who, with the "Father" and the "Holy Ghost," represents the "Trinity."

Christ was sent by the Father to man, to take upon himself, by his sacrifice, the sins of mankind, and to help them attain eternal salvation. The requisites for participation in this eternal salvation were "baptism" and an unquestioning faith in the Savior. Salvation is to be attained by faith,



not by deeds. Christ is enthroned in the heavenly kingdom, at God's right hand, and will judge the souls of men at the last Day of Judgment. Whoever believes in him will be saved, whoever denies him will be thrust into hell, where there will be "wailing and gnashing of teeth."

This faith forms the concept of Christianity. Only he who believes in these things can justly call himself a "Christian." The concept of Christianity is unchangeable for all time to come. What has changed during the course of centuries, and has caused the many subdivisions of Christianity, its division into so many sects, was the outer form, formalities, which applied either to the divine service or to purely clerical matters. But the doctrine of the faith itself was left inviolate by all Christian sects, irrespective of whether they were Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed Church, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Puritans, Methodists, or whatever else they were called.

As to the doctrine of faith, which, as a matter of fact, is preached in the churches of all Christian congregations to-day, we may safely state that it corresponds entirely with the dogma just stated. Therefore nothing has been changed in the doctrine of faith, and nothing can change in it, so long as we continue to speak of Christianity; for it is this faith alone that constitutes Christianity; everything else is an erroneous confusion of the concept itself with its supposed results.

The next important question which presents itself is: What relationship does this Christian doctrine, which has been spread with the utmost zeal throughout the world, bear to the present state of natural science? The answer to this question has been given at the beginning of this work, in the chapter on "Monotheism." It was there demonstrated how fundamentally different our present view of the world is from that entertained at the time of the early Hebrews. The latter had remained the same to the time of Christ. Even then it was still believed that man was the "Lord of creation"; the earth was supposed to be the center of the universe and created only to serve as a habitation for man. Sun, moon, and stars were considered attributes of

the earth, destined solely to provide man with light and warmth. Plants and animals existed only to serve him as food or in some other way. The divine doctrine of the Jews was in perfect accord with this view of the world. If the world had been "created," some one must have created it, and this necessitated the existence of a Deity. And if man was the purpose of the world, if the world was created to supply him with food and shelter, he owed God a debt of gratitude and obedience for the benefits and divine gifts of which he was the recipient. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, of a life after death, of reward for virtue and punishment for sin, was also in accord with this philosophy.

If the belief in the existence of a personal God, who watched over the acts and thoughts of every individual human being, was once adopted, all limits to speculation about a fantastic doctrine of faith were removed. Christ's remark, "With God all things are possible," is entirely logical and correct. If I believe in an almighty God, nothing should seem impossible to me. Therefore, the whole Christian doctrine, as we have briefly stated it, is no less credible than the mere faith in the almighty Jehovah.

The view of the world of the Greeks and Romans had already undergone considerable change at the time when Christianity began to be proclaimed. The old Gods had long ago been dethroned; and, instead of the doctrine of the Gods, the various philosophical systems had been adopted. Christianity and these philosophical views of the world were irreconcilable. Both could not exist, side by side; one or the other had to succumb. Historical circumstances, as has been demonstrated in foregoing chapters, gave the victory to Christianity, and the Romans' philosophical view of the world thereby received its death-thrust. The other European nations, the Germans and Slavs, stood on so low a level of civilization that there could be no thought of a view of the world on their part. They therefore adopted Christianity instead of their old doctrine of the Gods, and henceforth this was their view of the world.

During about fifteen hundred years this Christian

view of the world remained inviolate, science being forcibly suppressed and the nations kept in a state of ignorance and stupidity. But at last, when mankind succeeded in bursting the chains of orthodox religious constraint and shaking off the yoke of the cruel violence of the Church, science flourished anew. The greater the strides made in advance in the various branches of natural science, the more the dogmas of the Bible began to be questioned and opposed. The great discoveries in astronomy not only showed that the earth was not the center of the universe, about which the sun, moon, and stars turned as her satellites, but proved that the earth is one of the smallest and most insignificant of all the heavenly bodies. It was recognized that the earth was only a small planet of the great solar system to which it belongs, and that it, like all other planets, turned about the sun, which is a thousand times larger than they. But this whole solar system, with all its planets and moons, is only an atom in the great universe. Every single fixed star which we see in the sky is a sun like ours; many of them far larger. Every sun has its own planetary system and forms a world like our own. But all this, all the universal solar systems which we are able to perceive, taken together, are again only an atom in the endless universe. They form a system of suns which, with other systems that we are unable to perceive, turn about a great central sun. And in this way it goes on into infinity. Our poor senses are not able even to conceive of this one atom. What is our little earth compared with this infinity? A drop of water compared to all the oceans of the earth is far greater than our earth is compared to the universe. And just as it is with space, so the conception which we are able to form of time is as a fleeting moment compared to the eternity of the world. The entire duration of the solar system, from the time of its nebulous origin to its eventual destruction, is inconceivable to us. It comprises innumerable billions of years, and yet this period of time is only a fleeting moment in comparison with the eternity of the universe. An endless number of such solar systems originate and vanish, just as in our microcosm the single living creatures come and

go. But the great universe goes on and on, inconceivable, incomprehensible to the weak senses of man.

Just as science created an entirely new view of the world in us, so it also gave us a different conception of man. We know today that there can be no such thing as a soul independent of the body. That which is called soul is nothing but a function of the brain. At the moment that the brain ceases its activity, there is an end of the so-called soul. We know that the "creation" of man, as such, is a fairy-tale; that, in fact, the human species has quite gradually developed from lower animal states; that man, as well as the rest of Nature, is in a state of constant further development. We therefore know that there is no formal but only a gradual difference between man and animals, that we are no more justified in speaking of the human soul than of the soul of a dog or a horse. Science has taught us that there is no such thing as freedom of human volition, in a metaphysical sense; that, on the contrary, all human actions are the result of the condition of the brain at the time, and the circumstances that influence it. But the condition of the brain is dependent on heredity, congenital and accidental circumstances, for which the individual concerned certainly can not be held responsible. It is just as little to the credit of a genius that he has been born such, as it can be made a reproach to the idiot that he came into the world with a defective brain. The same is true of all other psychical qualities.

In forming our judgment of the world in which we live, it is of great importance to appreciate the fact that our perception of the same is altogether dependent on the function of our weak organs of sense. Because we happen to have organs of sight, hearing, smell and touch, our environments appear to us as sight-sound-smell and tactile images. If we imagine creatures having an entirely different sensory apparatus, those creatures would perceive the world as something totally different. It is far more probable that beings existing on the other celestial bodies differ in this way from us, than that they should bear an absolute resemblance to ourselves. Whoever finds it difficult to follow this

chain of thought, might imagine creatures having only organs of sight and touch, and others equipped only with those of sight and sound. How totally different the same things would appear to these two classes of creatures. The former, for example, would perceive a thunderstorm as lightning, the latter, on the contrary, as thunder, and yet, exactly the same phenomenon is the cause of both perceptions. We have this dual sensation because we are in possession of both senses. Other beings, if provided with the corresponding senses, may have a sixfold sensation of the same phenomenon.

As our perceptions depend upon our organs of sense, so our conceptions are only a product of our psychical mechanism. The conception, for example, that everything must have a cause, an effect and a purpose, is, therefore, like our whole perceptive apparatus, of a purely subjective nature. We are inclined to see a law of causality and a principle of utility everywhere, even where there can be no surety of the existence of such. We are inclined to think that we have eyes and ears "for the purpose" of seeing and hearing; while, as a matter of fact, we see because we happen to have eyes, and hear, because we are in possession of ears.

Whoever has arrived at a clear understanding of this subject will easily comprehend that it is highly unscientific to ask for the cause and purpose of the world; for Nature does not know these concepts, which exist only in our brain.

The sum of all those scientific facts which we have briefly put together, is what we call our modern scientific view of the world. How, in view of this, is it possible, we are compelled to ask ourselves, that these two views, the scientific and the Christian-religious, can exist side by side? Greater contradictions can not be imagined! Everything that the one teaches is made impossible by the other. And still they do exist, placid and undisturbed, side by side. Students in schools and colleges are taught these gross contradictions. In churches the Christian doctrine of faith is preached, and in public libraries modern scientific works are offered which prove the impossibility of this very doctrine.

How is the co-existence of these diametrically opposed views of the world to be explained?

The great mass of the people thoughtlessly accept the contradiction of the two views of the world without cudgeling their brains about the matter. From early childhood they have been taught that the one is called "religion" and the other "science," and with this they are satisfied. They think it must be so. They go to church on Sunday, listen to a pleasant sermon on some quotation from the Bible, sing a psalm and as a result are thoroughly at peace with themselves. In the afternoon they possibly read an article in the newspaper about some subject of natural science, which is in direct contradiction to the religious dogmas. But this does not disturb them; they do not even notice it, for the one is religion and the other science.

Thousands of persons do not bother themselves about either the one or the other. They do not go to church, nor do they read scientific books. They pursue their work, are busy from morning till night, spend their evenings in pleasant intercourse with their families, go walking on Sundays, amuse themselves, and in this way live their lives without troubling themselves about a "view of the world."

On the other hand, there are many people who even to-day hold fast to religion, to whom the Christian doctrine of faith is as sacred as it was to their forefathers. Among the lower classes, among people who have not had a higher education, this is not astonishing. On the contrary, since the people are brought up religiously, it is natural that they retain their faith so long as the same is not shattered by scientific knowledge. But we also find scientifically educated people, even men who themselves are occupied with natural sciences, who have, nevertheless, remained strictly religious. It is this phenomenon which is so astonishing and which requires a particular psychological explanation.

Above all, let us clearly understand what we mean, in a psychological sense, by "faith." The sum of all our conceptions, which directly or indirectly are founded on our sensory perceptions, is that which is called "knowledge." Everything which I directly see or hear or feel, I "know."

Likewise everything which I am aware of by logical deductions from this sensory perception is a matter of knowledge. On the other hand, we designate the sum of those conceptions which are based neither directly nor indirectly on our perception, as "faith." I "know," for example, that the sun, moon, and stars exist, because I have perceived them with my own senses. I also "know" that the earth moves about the sun, because this idea is the logical deduction from sensory impressions. Furthermore, I "know" that Julius Cæsar lived, though I never perceived him with my own senses. My idea, however, of his existence is based on a logical chain of conceptions which ultimately can be traced back to direct sensory perceptions. But with the ideas of "God," "Heaven," "Hell," "Satan," "salvation," etc., it is quite different. These ideas are based on neither direct nor indirect sensory perceptions, and if I, nevertheless, have a conception of the actual existence of these things, they are matters of faith. According to this, we mean by faith the assumption of the actual existence of a subject or an event, without the possibility of proving such existence by actual perceptions of the senses, or by logical deductions from such perceptions.

An even finer distinction may be made between two different forms of faith. The first form would be the one we have just described, that is, an assumption of something the actual existence of which can not be proven. A second form would comply with those cases in which we would likewise assume the actual existence of a thing, although it can be proven with certainty that such existence is a matter of impossibility. The first form might be called "faith," the second, "superstition."

If, by direct sense-perceptions or by logical deductions from them, it could be proven that Satan exists, we would "know" of his existence. If we, on the other hand, assume his existence as a fact, without being able to prove or disprove it, we "believe" in Satan. Finally, if we could logically prove that his existence is an impossibility, and still maintain the conception of his existence, this would be a "superstition."

Since our knowledge is only a matter of perception and reproduction, we can enlarge it at will, so far as the capacity of our psychical factors permit. The more we perceive with our senses and firmly establish what we have perceived, so that it can be reproduced upon demand—in other words, the more we “learn,” the more we will “know.” But in the matter of faith, this is different. Faith is not dependent on the power of perception, and can not, therefore, be influenced by the will. I can not acquire faith at will, as I can knowledge. It would be impossible to create a belief within myself, in spite of the most zealous efforts to do so, if the necessary conditions are not present. There is, therefore, still another psychical factor necessary to create a belief—emotion. Without emotion, no real faith can be produced. It is not a question of any special kind of emotion, which can be described by words, but may be a mixture of feelings, like love, fear, remorse, hope, etc. Our feelings can not be expressed in words any way, and here it is not the nature of the feeling that is important, but its intensity. Those conceptions intended to constitute faith must be accompanied by a high degree of feeling in order to appear as realities in spite of the absence of logical cognition. In other words, feeling must take the place of logic.

Since religious faith is usually established in earliest youth, they are, as a rule, the tender and manifold emotions of childhood which take part in the foundation of faith. What generally makes it so easy to produce faith in children, is the circumstance that the greatest enemies of faith have not yet put in an appearance—logical thinking and scientific cognition. After faith has once gained a firm foothold, new emotions continually arise to nourish and strengthen it. The recollections of youth are, in themselves, always accompanied by strong emotions which make all the conceptions and feelings of that time appear in a particular light.

Realizing the importance of this psychological fact, the emotion have always been stimulated to the highest degree in the performance of religious rites and ceremonies. The elaborate service of the Catholic Church, which entralls all the senses, is based on this fact. By the huge



structures of the gigantic cathedrals, through whose beautiful stained glass windows a soft light penetrates into the mysterious interior, illuminating the majestic columns and magnificent marble altars; by the thrilling harmonies of the powerful, resounding organ and the choir of boys with their appealing voices; by the fragrant perfume of incense wafted through the holy place, all the senses are really enthralled and wrought upon to a positive ecstasy of delight. Any one who has been accustomed to such impressions from his youth up, who associates every important event of life with religious ceremonies, who maintains his religious disposition by devout prayers, is in possession of an unshakable faith which nothing can disturb.

Just as with every other emotion, so faith also is entirely independent of our will. One can as little create faith in one's self, as one can love or hate to order. But, on the other hand, one can not shake off at will a faith that has once been engendered. The emotion of faith may be so strong that all the intellectual reasoning and logical arguments in the world can not destroy it. This accounts for the strange fact, which is not so very rare, that even scientific men cling with incredible tenacity to an orthodox faith, or retain some other kind of superstition. This can, perhaps, best be explained by comparing it with love. It is not a rare occurrence that a man loves to distraction a person whom he knows to be utterly unworthy of his devotion, that she is depraved, and untrue to him. He knows all this, he is furious with himself about his love, he struggles against it with all his reason and intelligence, and tries in every possible way to eradicate this unfortunate passion, but in vain; he loves and can not stop loving. It is the same with faith.

Others, who have also attained eminence in modern science, and nevertheless are convinced of the absolute truth of the religious doctrine, consider it the foremost duty of true science to reconcile those apparently contradictory views with each other. This is the sentiment from which in a great measure the manifold philosophical doctrines of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries emanated. These

were a mixture of the newly awakened Greek philosophy, of the Monotheistical doctrine, and of modern natural science. The more contradictory and irreconcilable these doctrines were, the more fascinating seemed the problem to be solved; for, starting from the premise that both doctrines, that is, religious faith and the conclusions of natural science, were true, one could attribute it only to the defectiveness of human cognition that the solution of this problem appear so difficult. Although the most prominent minds made it, at the time, their life-work to try to solve this problem, still, we, today, after all, arrive at the conclusion that behind the mystical darkness of their systems are hidden nothing but the hollowness and impotence of their doctrines. From the modern standpoint of natural science, we must regard speculative philosophy altogether as a matter of the past.

Nevertheless, such attempts still arise from time to time, for, on the one hand, it is difficult for those in question to drop their religious belief, to which they have become accustomed from childhood, and which has become endeared to them, while on the other, the scientific facts that can not fail to destroy this doctrine of faith can not be thrust aside as though they did not exist. Thus, for example, they try to reconcile the "creation of the world" in six days with the revelations of geology and astronomy, by considering each "day" as one of the great geological periods of time, and the different utterances of "God," such as "Let there be light," "let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters," "let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed," "let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven," "let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven"—as referring to the different geological formations, such as the paleozoic, mesozoic, canozoic, eras, etc.

This may make a scientific impression on the half-educated, and help him over the difficulty of those contradictions. But, as a fact, these explanations are really absurd, and are unworthy of serious consideration.

A way of looking at religious matters, that seems to be very popular among so-called religious freethinkers, is that of symbolism. They think that they adapt themselves to our modern scientific views by retaining nothing of the old religious doctrine but the faith in God and by explaining everything else in a different way. All the stories in the Bible that contradict modern natural science, like the story of creation, the revelations to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the events of the time of Moses, such as his experiences on Mount Sinai, are all called myths, analogous to the Homeric doctrine of the Gods. A great many think they have discovered a deep symbolical wisdom in those legends, and look down pityingly on the ignorant person who is not acquainted with the latest researches in the domain of the "Mythology of the Hebrews." "Learned" comparisons are made between "Jewish mythology" and the legends of the Gods and heroes of the other peoples of antiquity, and finally proof is brought that the Bible and Homer originate from the same pre-historic source.

It would take us too far if we were to go into a detailed refutation of this view. We may spare ourselves this task, especially as it is after all a matter of indifference to our purpose whether the stories in the Bible are mythological fairy-tales or, as we have tried to prove, are the product of a diseased brain. The only thing of importance to us is the fact that the so-called revelations of God must have been the creation of human imagination; whether these imaginings were of a mythological-poetical nature, or whether they were the result of a diseased mental condition, is immaterial to our especial purpose. We must, however, most emphatically object to the purely arbitrary and absolutely illogical views which represent the Biblical stories as myths, and at the same time wishes to retain faith in the existence of a personal God. The doctrine of a personal God is based solely and alone on the so-called "revelations" in the Bible. Either you believe in these and retain your God, or you abandon them and thereby put an end to the glory of Jehovah. A compromise between the two is logically impossible.

Put before us the alternative to consider the Biblical tales as mythological poetry, or to recognize in them the before-described paranoical mental aberrations, there can be no doubt as to the latter view being far more plausible than the former. The Bible is an historical book and contains a long chain of events which we know to be such. Why should one then arbitrarily pronounce this or that story a myth? Certainly, for no other reason than because it sounds too improbable to be accepted as an actual occurrence. But if we can offer an explanation that divests those events of their improbability, why, then, continue to consider them myths?

Besides, one must admit that it takes a great stretch of the imagination to picture Jacob, for example, as "conqueror of the dragon" and "liberator of the sheltered Virgin," and to put the story of him side by side with the legends of Perseus and Peleus. On the other hand, it can not be difficult for any one who is at all familiar with mental diseases to recognize paranoia in these absolutely typical cases.

There can not be the slightest doubt that paranoiacs with delusions of grandeur and hallucinations existed in ancient times, particularly among the Jews, as well as today. Inasmuch as we have no other reports of such cases, though they must have created a great sensation at the time, is it not as evident as anything can be that those men who professed to be in constant communication with God belonged in this category? Furthermore, these cases are so absolutely typical, they offer such characteristic pictures of the disease, that it is utterly impossible that such descriptions should have been invented. If we were to try today, from our psychiatric experience, to sketch a picture of paranoia surrounding it, as in a romance, with the environments of ancient times, we could create nothing more characteristic than Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the Prophets, and Christ. What could possibly be advanced against the assumption of paranoia in these men? Absolutely nothing! No one could logically contradict it. The only thing that may shock the world, is the destruction of ideals that have been

cherished for thousands of years, but we must not allow this to interfere with the presentation of the facts.

Those "religious freethinkers" who have retained their Jehovah, but declare the Bible a compilation of mythological tales, are in a different position in the matter of the person of Christ. From time to time one of them makes the new discovery that Christ never lived at all. Of course it is always very convenient in encountering a difficult problem to deny its existence altogether. This reminds us of the ostrich, which hides his head when danger threatens it. To deny the existence of Christ is absurd. No product of the imagination could ever have had such a revolutionizing effect all over the world as the phenomenon of "Christ." Even though it is true that we have no writings of Christ, and that the Gospel was written more than a century afterwards, we must still bear in mind that oral traditions played a far more important role at that time than they do today; that, for example, a large part of the Jewish religion is based on traditions altogether, and that the enthusiasm and fanaticism of the Christian congregations of the first centuries were so intense that oral traditions are almost a more reliable source of information than single documents, the authenticity of which could, after all, also be doubted. But are we not in possession of the writings of Christ's contemporaries? Are we also to repudiate the history of the Apostles, the many letters written by Paul, Peter, John, and James? With equal or even greater right one could question the existence of nearly all other historical personages of that time. Socrates has left us no writings either, and the evidences of his pupils, particularly Plato, are not nearly so convincing as the accounts we have of Christ.

Another class of "believers in God," though they do not doubt the existence of Christ, still do not believe in his divinity; they consider him an "ingenious, wise man," a "moralist." This class is not like the former, composed only of isolated individuals, but a whole "Christian sect" follows this doctrine. These are the modern "Unitarians," whose founder was Joseph Priestley. They are not to be con-

founded with the old Unitarians, who adopted this name to designate the divine unity of the Trinity. One must also avoid making their doctrine identical with that of the Socinians. The latter also considered Christ a human being, but believed that God had raised him to a Deity and called him to sit beside him on his throne. Modern Unitarians are pure humanitarians, in their estimation Christ being an ordinary human being.

So far as these people are concerned, there is no reason in the world why they should call themselves a sect of "Christians," since they do not believe in the divinity of Christ. A sect which expressly repudiates the doctrine of the divinity of Christ has absolutely no right to call itself "Christian"; for Christianity consists, above all else, in faith in Christ as the Son of God, the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind. The Unitarians, who believe in God, but consider Christ a human being, are, according to their religion, Jews. The fact that the Unitarians, in spite of their denial of the divinity of Christ, call themselves a Christian sect, clearly shows what we emphasized before, that the concept of Christianity is being expounded at will, and is even used to designate a race.

But, we must ask, how do these people, who consider Christ a "wise man" only, explain the fact that he not only claimed to be the Son of God, but demanded that all mankind worship him as God? That he again and again spoke of his "Father in heaven, who had sent him to earth" to take upon himself the sins of mankind? That he exclaimed to the people: "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day"? How do these people explain all this? How do they explain the fact that the son of an ordinary carpenter rises, step by step, to the position of "Prophet," "Messiah," "King of the Jews," "Son of God," "God"? Where in all this is there any "deep wisdom"? What does the great "moralist" mean when he says: "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day"? How do they account

for his cursing every one who questions his divinity, and his prophesying that those who do not believe in him will go down to hell, "where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth"? How—how, indeed—do they explain all this?

There is, again, a very convenient way to do this: They simply deny everything. That is all nonsense. Christ was a wise man, consequently he could not have uttered all this nonsense. And this ends it. Then, again, the important discovery is set forth that the Gospel was written more than a century after Christ. Christ was a wise man, a moralist, an ethical philosopher. All those supposed utterances of his are perversions or even later inventions.

By what right, with what kind of logic, can one make such statements? Is not a procedure like this most arbitrary? For no other reason but my inability to explain a thing, should I deny its existence altogether? And does such a denial bring us nearer the solution of our problem? the phenomenon "Christ" is, as no one can deny, unique in the history of the world. The whole civilized world has, for two thousand years, worshiped a man as God, and now we are asked to believe that he was simply a "wise man," whose wisdom, however, had been lost, and in place of which all sorts of ridiculous and incredible stories had been invented during the course of time. This is obviously the last resort of desperation. Those in question, not being able to believe in the divinity of Christ, have only the alternative left, to assume that Christ was an adventurer; this no one cares to believe; consequently, in their despair, the whole thing is denied. It is, indeed, almost as impossible to think of Christ as an adventurer as of him as a God. No one, not even the most accomplished actor, could have lived such a role, without himself believing in it. What gave Christ his enormous success among the people was the very fact that he did believe in himself, that sincerity and faith in his convictions were stamped on his countenance.

Others, again, believe that all the utterances of Christ, as reported by the evangelists, contain a wealth of the deepest wisdom. These are the Symbolists, who discover an obscure meaning in every one of his words, and write endless com-

mentaries on the Gospels in order to "elucidate" their meaning. Everything is meant "symbolically." It shows complete ignorance and lack of understanding on the part of those who fail to recognize this and who take the utterances of Christ literally.

The symbolical interpretation of Christ's utterances seems to get color from the fact that Christ was in the habit of expressing his ideas in parables, the latter being *eo ipso* symbolical. Just as the various persons and their actions in his parables had a symbolical meaning, so the "kingdom of God" was also said to represent merely a spiritual realm, not a real material kingdom. According to these views he called himself the "Son of God" only in the sense that all men are "God's children," of which distinction the people should show themselves worthy by leading virtuous and honorable lives.

Such a symbolic interpretation is almost as convenient as the complete denial of the facts in question. Christ spoke in parables, because this was the general form of speech used by the Prophets. Most of his parables are even taken directly from the writings of the Prophets. But what has this to do with the always and ever recurring assurance that he was the Son of God, and that the father had sent him, and that all those who believed in him would attain eternal life, while those who did not were doomed to eternal damnation? How can you believe that upon being brought before his judges, when he knew his life was at stake, he still should have continued to answer "symbolically," whether he believed himself the "Son of God"? This whole assumption is such an arbitrary perversion of facts that it is almost impossible to discuss it logically.

But, be this as it may, those who adhere to this symbolic interpretation thereby deny Christianity just as much as those who claim that Christ never lived at all. For nothing can alter the fact that the quintessence of Christianity is the belief in the divinity of Christ, and that this belief has existed for the past two thousand years. It is, after all, immaterial whether one denies the existence of Christ, altogether, whether one interprets his utterances symbolically,



or attributes them to a mentally diseased condition—Christianity stands and falls with the belief in the divinity of Christ and the hope of eternal salvation through this belief.

“Religious freethinkers,” who in one or the other way make a compromise with the Holy Scriptures and the utterances of Christ, are, after all, only an unimportant minority. The great mass of people firmly adhere even today to the principal tenets of Christianity, that is, they believe in the divinity of Christ, in a life after death, in the last Judgment, and eternal salvation. With the exception of the before-mentioned Unitarians, all Christian sects are at present still taught by their ministers exactly what they were taught in former centuries—therefore, Christianity itself has not changed and can not change.

If we examine this Christian faith, as it is taught to the people in church and children in school, in reference to its effect on the conduct of the individual and on the entire community, we can not deny the fact that we have to deal with the most enormous contradictions. Only the force of habit, which conquers everything, divests these contradictions of a disastrous influence which they would otherwise exercise on the unprejudiced.

The essence of the Christian doctrine is faith in Jesus Christ. Whoever believes in him will be saved; whoever denies him is doomed to eternal torture in hell. If a person really believes in this, if he is convinced of the truth of this doctrine, what must be the consequences regarding his conduct toward his fellowmen? Would not, in this case, our feeling of humanity prompt us to do everything in our power to help our fellowmen to attain eternal salvation and to guard them from damnation? This, indeed, was the attitude taken in former centuries. The most frightful cruelties, the rack and the stake, do not owe their origin to the degeneracy of mankind, to joy in the sufferings of fellow-human beings, but are the logical and necessary result of the Christian doctrine. What were the physical pains and agonies of the torture-chamber in comparison with eternal damnation in hell? If by thousands of condemnations to torture or death at the stake only a few souls had been saved,

did one not bestow the most graceful act of charity on one's fellowmen? Was it not the most sacred duty of every one who had the power to do so, to help people to salvation and save them from damnation? These were the motives which actuated men like Calvin to sentence human beings to death at the stake and to watch over his fellowmen's loyalty to their faith with the greatest severity. In this sense, Philip II. of Spain said that he considered it the greatest sin to save a heretic from the stake. From this viewpoint, were not the acts of the Inquisition the greatest blessing to mankind? How could it be considered a progress of civilization to cease to trouble one's self about the salvation of the souls of one's fellow-human beings and think only of one's self?

The contradiction here indicated is the more evident, because of the fact that in every other respect care for the welfare of mankind has been made the main factor of our modern civilization. We have good reason to be proud of our modern hygienic institutions, which save the lives of thousands of persons every year. We deem it the highest duty of the authorities of every commonwealth to protect the people against disease, to provide hygienic homes, to adjust the mode of life to the demands of nature, etc. Modern civilization has made all this a duty to our fellowmen—and to the eternal salvation of their souls we are to be indifferent? What are all those hygienic regulations, what are physical sufferings, what is disease, what is death, in comparison with eternal salvation and eternal damnation? And is it not, in spite of this, a fact, that in the same ratio that advance has been made in the domain of general hygiene, to the "salvation of the souls" of the people we have grown more and more indifferent? Does the present government trouble itself whether its citizens shall go to heaven because they believe in the Redeemer or go to hell for their lack of faith? In many modern states churches are still public institutions; in others, on the other hand, they are left entirely to the option of the public. If the people would cease to form congregations and refuse to contribute to the support of the church, there would soon be no more churches; the government does not bother about

them. And still we see how the State protects its citizens in all other domains, and cares for their well-being. The State makes laws against gambling so that no one shall be tempted to lose his money in games of chance; but the State does not trouble itself about the loss of the soul. It enacts the most stringent laws that the necessities of life, meat, milk, etc., be delivered to the people in a pure, unadulterated condition, but it does nothing toward saving the soul. Baptism is the most important Christian sacrament. Just as it did two thousands years ago, the Church today teaches that newborn children are purified of original sin and permitted to enter the kingdom of heaven, through baptism. If you believe this, what awful cruelty is it to the poor innocent children to withhold baptism from them! Everywhere there are, at present, societies for the prevention of cruelty to children, who see to it that no injustice is done them, that they are not abused, that they are fed and clothed, but the enforcement of the only means to provide them with eternal salvation has in recent years been abolished. In former times people were legally compelled to have their children baptized; today it is left to the discretion of every one whether he wishes to send his children to heaven or not.

Does it seem possible that any one can fail to realize these contradictions? We praise—and justly so—the abolition of religious coercion as the most admirable act of our advanced civilization. But, on the other hand, every logical, thinking person must admit that just this religious coercion can not be dispensed with by true Christianity. Christianity has made true, self-sacrificing love for fellow-human beings theoretically its own prerogative. But how can there be a question of love for one's neighbor if each person is concerned solely with the salvation of his own soul and does not worry himself at all about the eternal salvation of his fellow-men? Just as a loving mother forces her child to do what is good for it and to leave undone what might harm it, so the government should force the people to believe, and check every free religious movement in the bud, if it really believes in the Christian doctrine. Assuming the Christian doctrine to be the absolute truth, the freedom of religious belief of

our present civilization would represent an enormous retrogression compared with the torture and religious constraint of the Middle Ages.

But this is not the only evidence of the vast contradiction between Christianity and our modern practical life. In school and church people are taught to pray and are impressed with the efficiency of prayer. We will not go into the metaphysical side of this question here. Our view of it must be apparent without further elucidation, for if there is no God, there can, of course, be no sense in praying. But for the sake of argument, let us assume that there is a wise, omnipotent God, who governs the world. Would it not be a profanation, a blasphemy, to assume that this omnipotent being should allow himself to be influenced in his decisions by the egotistical begging of every single individual? Just imagine what a lot of stuff is daily babbled to the all-wise God, and that should influence him in his manner of conducting the world? Can sane people really believe such nonsense? And now let us consider the consequences which would result therefrom. If you believe in the efficiency of prayers, you must assume that God has the fate of every single individual in his hands, that everything that happens to us is by the will of God. This actually corresponds to the doctrine of religion. I am to be grateful to God for every good fortune; every adversity, on the other hand, I have to regard as a punishment for my sins. But the course of every person's life is dependent on his environment; it is influenced by the actions of other people. What others do to me must, therefore, also be ordained by God, if my welfare and my life are in his hands. If, for example, a burglar breaks into my house tomorrow and murders me, it was God's will that I should lose my life. He either wished to punish me or had some reason unknown to me for permitting this to happen. But how is it with the murderer? He is arrested by the police, accused of the murder, tried and executed. What right have we to punish a person if God caused him to commit the deed? Either the murderer is merely a tool in the hand of God, and we, therefore, have no right to punish him, or the man acted

contrary to the knowledge and will of God, which would upset our view that our fate is in God's hands.

Ever since there have been men, there have been wars, but never have more bloody and destructive wars been fought than those which raged between "Christian brethren" because of their difference as to religious opinions. Before every battle all priests and warriors fall on their knees and pray to God to help them butcher their "enemies." Afterwards, the victorious party gives thanks to God for his assistance in killing the most people. But this same God, to whom these prayers are directed, has expressly commanded that you should love your enemies, that if a person strikes you on the right cheek, you should offer him your left. And still God allows the people to wage wars, and accepts the gratitude offered in all the churches of the country for the victory he has helped the one party to win. But then, just take a look at those "victorious parties" in the history of the world, the parties to whom God has given the victory. There are the Vandals who destroyed Rome, who plundered the churches and raped the women. There are those innumerable wars which were conducted solely for reasons of greed and avarice, and after which the victors thanked God for the rich booty he allowed them to grasp. Think of the famous opium war of the English. By force of arms the Christian Englishmen compelled the heathen Chinese to allow the importation of opium, and to poison their entire nation, in order that the Christians might make a lot of money. God gave the victory to the English. In all English churches echoed prayers of gratitude to the Lord, Jesus Christ. The heathen Chinese had to poison themselves with opium, and the Christian English filled their pockets with money.

If all logical consequences were to be drawn from praying to God, what would the world look like! The ascetics and hermits, who withdrew from the world and spent their whole lives praying, were at least logical. But today prayer is given the lie by every human action, by every law enacted for the good of the community.

In the United States the most recent religious humbug,

"Christian Science," has gotten hold of a great mass of the people. The quintessence of this new doctrine is that there really is no such thing as disease. All that a person who believes himself ill needs to do is to believe in Jesus Christ, to pray to him, and—to consider himself well. In the city of New York alone there are quite a number of magnificent marble palaces, in which "Christian Scientists" hold their meetings and from which divine "Healers" are sent out to save mankind. All human ills, even organic heart or brain diseases, are assumed to be cured by the prayers of these people. You can even obtain "absent treatment" for non-believers—of course for good money—who, nevertheless, recover from their sufferings.

A person who does not believe in Christian Science as a rule makes fun of it; he ridicules and scorns the "superstitious fools," and can not understand how, "in our enlightened twentieth century," any one can believe in such nonsense! But by what right can you logically ridicule Christian Science without doing the same to Christianity? What is the difference between Christian Science and the Christian doctrine? Was not Christ himself a healer like modern Christian Scientists? Was he not supposed to make the blind see by smearing a mixture of sand and saliva on their eyes? And he by no means laid claim to the art of healing for himself exclusively. On the contrary, every one who believed in him was to have the same power. Therefore, what is the difference between the two? "With God all things are possible," said Christ; by faith mountains "can be moved hence." Why should God not be able to cure diseases, if one prays to him? After all, religious persons do this anyway, consequently wherein lies the difference?

Ah! but here again we find the capital contradiction! In New York a person is punished by law for culpable negligence, if his child dies of some disease, and no doctor, but only a Christian Science healer, has been called in to treat the child. Can a more nonsensical contradiction be imagined? God is omnipotent and determines the fate of man. God in his unfathomable goodness listens to the petitions

of his children, and to pray to him is man's highest duty. If my child becomes ill, I must pray to him to make it well again. But if he does not save it, I am to be punished for not having called in a physician. The physician, therefore, stands above God.

Christ told the people they need only pray and believe in him, and their Heavenly Father would give them everything they needed. They need not work, nor trouble themselves about the future; only heathens did this. They should look at the lilies of the field, and just as their Heavenly Father did not allow one of these to perish, he would care for them, too. What would the world be like if people really followed this idiotic advice? Imagine the father of a big family, looking at the lilies of the field, while his wife and children die of starvation!

Here is a true, exceedingly pathetic occurrence. Two brothers, twins, had to pass their examination for promotion to the next higher class. They were both a little backward and had been told that they would have to make special efforts if they desired to reach their goal, to be promoted. The one spent every moment of his leisure in studying his lessons. Late into the night he sat poring over his Latin grammar. The other also did his regular work, but spent his leisure hours in prayer. He had heard that the Lord, Jesus Christ, took particular care of the children that came unto him to have all their wishes granted. So he prayed. Day after day he lifted his young voice to the Lord, and before going to sleep he dropped to his knees at the window, with eyes raised to the stars above, where the Lord, Jesus Christ, dwelt. He let no free moment pass without directing prayers to heaven. He had told his brother about it, but he stuck to his work, and while the one prayed the other learned his Latin lessons. The examination day came. The one passed with honors, the other flunked. What bitter pain! What a tragic disappointment! The ideals of a child's soul were shattered. And whose fault was it?

The poor children! What a lot of nonsensical stuff they are taught in Sunday schools! God created the world with

all that is therein, and man, too. Why, asks the child, did not God create only good people, why were they all so wicked? Man is the work of God, and yet they were all so bad that he had to drown them all. Was he not able to create better people? Of course he had to have some practice in the creating of people; he destroyed the first just as an artist destroys his work until he is satisfied with what he has produced. But human beings are still wicked. God destroys hundreds of thousands of them by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, epidemics, etc. Will God never learn to create good human beings? Were there not some good people whom God destroyed at the same time that he destroyed the bad ones? Were there only wicked people in Herculaneum and Pompeii when these places were destroyed? Oh, yes! These were heathens; they knew nothing of God and our Lord, Jesus Christ, and so it served them right that God burned them all up and covered them with lava and ashes. But why did not God reveal himself to these people, too? They were created by him as well as the Jews in Palestine! Why did he not speak to them and give them the same laws he gave to Moses on Mount Sinai?

One could continue in this way, and marvel about—the “wisdom of God,” which is so illogical and senseless that one must ask again and again: What kind of a God must this be, who commits such follies and cruelties, who becomes enraged against his own work and thrusts the responsibility of it on others? God can create good and ingenious people, why then does he create so many rascals and idiots? But more than that! Not only does he create idiots and rascals, but he then wants to punish them with eternal damnation for being idiots and rascals. We weak human beings have advanced so far with our modern civilization that we no longer see an object to be damned in the criminal, but rather an object of pity. We came to realize the fact that no one chooses to become a criminal; that the act of the criminal is no more to be condemned than the bite of a mosquito which robs us of our blood. We therefore consider revenge something that belongs to barbarism, unworthy of our efforts at civilization. We do not punish the



criminal for the sake of revenge, but to protect mankind and to act as a deterrent. Our modern prisons are, in every respect, conducted on humane principles. Care is taken to provide them with sanitary arrangements, prisoners are given nourishing food; they are kept occupied with useful work; healthy, physical exercise is insisted upon; they are given as much amusement as circumstances permit. To inflict physical pain intentionally on a prisoner, such as by whipping or any kind of mutilation, is considered today the most brutal barbarism. With the exception of Christian Russia, there is today no country that lays any claim to civilization in which such principles are not acted upon. But what does religion teach? How does God act? What does Christianity command? God thrusts his own creations, human beings whom he himself made, into a hell made for this very purpose, where they are to suffer unspeakable tortures for all time to come. Without hope of relief, without pity, they must eternally suffer in this hell; nothing can save them. Martin Luther, who so frequently boasts that he will go to heaven, while his Christian brethren, the Papists, will go to hell, says in his confession of faith: "I believe in the resurrection after death at the Judgment Day, of both the pious and the wicked, that each one of them will suffer in his body what he has deserved; and therefore the pious will attain eternal life with Christ and the wicked will die eternal death with the devil and his angels. For I do not agree with those who teach that devils, too, will finally be saved."

Thus, our modern civilization stands far above Christianity. A divine being, created by superstition such as this only, eternal God, is the product of ideas of the crudest barbarism and purest selfishness. Were there in reality a being brutal enough to act in the manner which religion attributes to God, he would, far more than any of his creatures, deserve to be thrust into hell "where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth."

The contradictions between the Christian doctrine and practical life are so numerous and pertain to so many things in our daily existence, that we are unable to do justice to

this subject at this point. It is hardly conceivable how actually devout Christians, who believe in eternal salvation and damnation, can take any interest whatever in the vain pleasures of this earthly life. What are the few years of this life in comparison with eternity? If one considers what it means to be put before the alternative of living in eternal bliss or suffering the eternal tortures of hell, how can one contemplate for one moment doing what may jeopardize one's salvation? Since Christ, at every opportunity, expressly stated that the last should be first, and that a camel could more easily pass through a needle's eye than a rich man enter the kingdom of heaven, how can a devout Christian hesitate even for a moment to be the last rather than the first? And how is it that not every devout Christian has a perfect aversion to wealth?

History gives enough examples of individuals who logically adapted their mode of life practically to the Christian doctrine. They are the "Saints," mentioned in the foregoing chapters, who spent their lives in deserts and caves, men like Hieronymus. These pious Christians tried to live in exact accordance with the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. They disdained all earthly possessions, lived like the animals of the wilderness, and babbled prayers from morning until night. According to the Christian doctrine, this is the ideal life for a human being. Hieronymus really did make himself immortal, for every great artist, and little ones especially, from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, have done him the honor of reproducing him in a thousand different positions. But what would our civilization be like today, if there had been nothing but such pious Christians? What would we say today of people who lived like those "Saints"? In all probability they would be committed to an insane asylum. Are there any people today who would rather be the last than the first? Are there people who would rather be poor than rich? In short, are there people who even remotely think of carrying out, in practical life, what Christianity preaches in its churches?

But then again it is always said: Ah! this is not the way Christ meant it! These are symbolical expressions! A

deep wisdom is contained in all this! You ignorant people do not understand this! This is the deep, secret mysticism of Christianity.

What nonsensical twaddle this is, this talk about the symbolical meanings and the obscure mysticism of Christianity! How silly to believe that if a God had really come down to mankind in order to enlighten them, he would have spoken to uneducated, uncouth fishermen in such deep, symbolical terms that even after two thousand years the average intelligent person can not understand them! The least that one can expect of a God is that he express himself clearly, particularly if he address himself to ignorant fishermen. What reason could God have had to speak in such riddles—he in the Old, and his Son in the New Testament—that for two thousand years the “wisest” men had to cudgel their brains to explain their meaning, and that, after all, each one put a different interpretation on them? Did God really wish to propose riddles to us? Can any one really believe that Christ remained quietly seated on his throne in heaven, looking on complacently, while thousands and thousands of Christians killed one another, because they were in doubt as to the meaning of his statements; as, for example, whether the sacrament was to be administered in one or in both forms? Why did he not come down to enlighten them? He could thereby have prevented all that awful bloodshed, all that murder! If there be a personal God, who cares for the weal and woe of every single one of his creatures, why does he not speak to us and tell us what to do? He sees how millions of churches have been erected in his honor and in that of his Son, and that therein, on every Sunday and holiday, the greatest follies and wickednesses are preached to the people about him. Why does he quietly look on at all this? Why does he not once let his voice ring out and clearly and distinctly tell mankind what he demands of them? Would we not all be only too glad to receive his commands and act according to them? Would God ask us to believe anything which the brain he has given us can not possibly believe? Why should he expect us to “believe” anything at all? Why does he not reveal himself

to our physical cognition, so that we may "know" that there is a God, instead of having to "believe" it?

It is, indeed, incredible how most people, in consequence of their accustomed religious faith, continually revolve about these contradictions, without ever suspecting their existence. Here is an example, taken from every day life, which accidentally occurred on the day when these lines were written:

A lady comes for consultation with her thirteen-year-old daughter, who, for the past five years, has mentally gone backwards instead of forward. Examination shows an organic brain disease, hereditary syphilis. The mother also stated that about four weeks previous to this the girl had been run over; that the wheels of a wagon had gone over her legs; but that, curiously enough, the child had suffered no other injuries but a few contusions of the lower extremities, from which she recovered after a short time. The physician tries to explain the serious nature of the disease to the mother; he tells her that the child is suffering from an organic brain disease; that a considerable part of the brain has degenerated, and consequently complete recovery, that is, the development of a normal functioning of the brain, can not be expected. Whereupon the mother replied: "God has miraculously preserved the child in this accident. Surely, this obviously proves that God does not wish her to perish. And if he wishes her to live, will he not also let her recover from this disease?" Poor mother! Poor child! The disease is incurable, and during her whole life the child will remain an idiot. The mother's logic is perfectly correct, if the premise were also correct! Is it comprehensible why God saved the child if he will let her go through life an idiot? Why did he send the accident upon the poor defective child at all, if he intended to save her from it? Why did he inflict a brain disease on the innocent child, making it an idiot? Why in any case does God make people ill if he afterwards allows them to recover? Merely to trick them? Or is he thinking, in his "unfathomable wisdom," of the physicians who would have to starve if there were no diseases? And if God is so benevolent as to send me a

severe typhoid fever, from which I recover after a long siege of trouble and pain, I should be grateful to him for being so kind as to allow me to recover? Oh! Of course, I am a sinner and God wanted to punish me by making me lie in bed for several weeks. But how is it in case of innocent children? Why has God created so many infectious children's diseases? A poor little baby, of two years, can surely have committed no sins. Oh! But here God wishes to punish the mother by inflicting pain and suffering on her best beloved, the thing dearest to her on earth. Are we to believe this? What would you say of a man who revenged himself on a woman by inflicting physical injury on her innocent child? You would spit in his face and call him the worst scoundrel the world has ever seen. And then we are to believe God capable of this? Oh! Then again, we are told that old rubbish about original sin. This baby is in this vale of sorrow and must expiate the sins of its fathers. Has there ever been anything more idiotic than this doctrine of original sin? In the first place, we are taught that Christ took the sins of mankind upon himself, and that as soon as children were baptized they were purified of all sin. But aside from this, how can you expect a sensible person to believe that we are to be punished today for what people have done two thousand years ago? Because Adam and Eve partook of forbidden fruit, are we to be punished by disease and other evils? How utterly absurd is the whole story of Adam and Eve! Who is really the guilty party in this affair? God alone, and no one else. He creates his human beings, one from dust and the other from a rib. These he places in a paradise where everything is beautiful and comfortable. Right before them he plants an apple tree and forbids them to eat of its fruit. Why does he do this? Is it not wrong to lead people into temptation? But, not satisfied with putting the object of temptation as a bait before them, he also sends a serpent, who tries in every possible way to persuade them—at that time serpents could speak—to disobey God's command. Isn't this disgraceful on the part of God? How could he, at the very beginning of the world, be so malicious? Adam and Eve had in no

way offended him, why, then, did he lead them into temptation? But let us suppose that this was all quite as it should be, that at that time in Paradise, it was considered decent to intentionally lead innocent people into theft, then why did God not create his people so that they would resist this temptation? This man and woman were his work, and he alone was responsible for their actions. Therefore God created men very weak and imperfect. But instead of rectifying this, so far as possible, by protecting them from all evil influences, it is just he who exercises this evil, baleful influence upon them. And then he kicks them out of his Paradise! If any one deserved to be thrust out of Paradise, it was God himself, and no one else.

You see to what horrid nonsense the Jewish Christian doctrine of faith leads as soon as you try to draw any kind of logical conclusion from it. This "only, eternal God," who himself created everything, who made good and evil, angels and devils, must really be at odds with himself incessantly, must punish himself for his own work, must impose penalties on human beings for being what he made them.

How much more sensible and logical the Greek theology is in comparison. How beautifully and poetically an epidemic of disease is symbolically described therein. Apollo, incensed, sends his devastating arrows among the people until the revenge of the God is appeased and his good will won anew. Here there is some sense in the affrighted people praying to the Gods for protection; for, while Apollo sent his arrows, Athene could protect her valiant warriors with her shield, and Hera may listen to the supplication of the wife, who was grieving at home about her beloved husband on the battlefield. The Gods did not create man and are not able to regulate their thoughts and actions at will. They, therefore, have a logical right to take offense at the actions of men; they may love and hate them. But God, who himself created man, who himself governs all his thoughts and actions, who can, at his pleasure, let him perform good or evil deeds, how can he be offended and punish his child?

Is it not incomprehensible that even scientifically edu-

cated people should not see these glaring contradictions? How can we explain the fact that by far the greater part of mankind clings to the old religious doctrine, which is at absolute variance with all logic and intelligence? And still it is so. With comparatively few exceptions, people are still religious today. They are not all "orthodox"; a great many call themselves "free thinkers" and "enlightened"; but they are all more or less religious, that is, they all believe in "God!" But, according to our opinion, these so-called "free thinkers" and "enlightened" believers, are far more illogical than those who are loyal to the old, unchanged, orthodox traditions. If I "believe" in anything at all, that is, if I assume anything to be true of which my intellect tells me the opposite, I may as well believe everything which led to that assumption. In other words, a great many people do not believe in the story of Adam and Eve. They do not believe that God had confidential interviews with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the Prophets. They do not believe that God had a consultation with Moses on Mount Sinai, lasting forty days, and there dictated the Ten Commandments. They do not believe in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. They do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God. They do not believe in Saints. They do not believe in all this, for they are "free thinkers," but they do believe in "God"!

There are a great many such people. As to the significance of the Bible, this is a matter of absolute indifference to them. They are not bothered about it. As a fact, it makes no difference to them whether the Bible represents a mythological cult or whether our opinion of mental disease is correct; they simply say: "I do not believe this thing," and that ends it. But they do believe in God.

The faith in God of the orthodox Jews and Christians has at least its logical foundation. By God's revealing himself to the Patriarchs and Prophets his actual existence is proved and their belief justified. Since, furthermore, nothing is impossible to God, the Almighty, there is no reason to reject the belief in Christ and the Holy Ghost. But on what does the "free thinker," who denies all these things, base

his belief in God? If you ask such people why they believe in God, they will give you some stupid answer, such as, "One must believe in something; one can't go through life a heathen," or, "Some one must have created the world." Some even intrench themselves behind a mass of philosophical twaddle, which, of course, they do not understand themselves.

The reason that most people have retained their belief in God lies in the fact, emphasized at the beginning of this chapter, that faith is an emotion, based on heredity, education, and habit, and which continues to exist independent of one's will and intelligence. The mere words, "God" and "Christ," arouse a feeling of reverential awe, which continues throughout life in spite of all intellectual reasons which should destroy their significance.

No matter what attitude a person may take towards religious belief, the fact remains that Christianity, which has dominated mankind for two thousand years, and is today preached in all the churches of the civilized world, offers the greatest imaginable contradiction to the achievements of modern science and to the nature and character of our modern civilization. Thanks to our ceaseless craving and struggling for knowledge, truth will finally prevail in this domain, too. But we must admit that the realization of this truth will be bitter and hard. Indeed, bitter and hard! To be obliged to admit that almost the entire human race has had as its ideals for the past two thousands years the delusions and hallucinations of a few old Jews, and that all their thoughts and actions, their hopes and desires, have been centered on this one subject; that millions of human beings have been cruelly tortured, butchered, and burnt alive on account of this old Jewish insanity; that men, until a comparatively short time ago, mutually slaughtered and killed one another by the thousands and thousands because each one believed himself to be the sole possessor of the truth; that everything that was called art, science, and literature, was concentrated on this one subject, which today we recognize as the product of the mental disease of a few old Jews—this is hard. Such an admission can not fail to



be galling. We can readily understand how every effort will be put forth against making such an admission, but of what avail? Truth must and will prevail, if not today, then later—come it must! Civilization forges ahead and will succeed in shaking off the last fetters of superstition.

## 2. THE ETHICS OF MODERN CHRISTIANITY.

In spite of the fact that Christianity has kept mankind in a state of stupidity and superstition for nearly two thousand years; in spite of the fact that there has been a chance for civilization only since the time when man succeeded in breaking the bonds and shaking off the yoke of Christianity; in spite of the fact that our scientific view of the universe as well as the practical life of every single human being offers a complete contradiction to the Christian doctrine—in spite of all these undeniable facts, people still continue to boast of this Christianity and make the children in school believe that we owe our present civilization to Christianity. In all books on the history of civilization, the “heathen” are looked down upon with haughtiness, and “heathen” philosophers, like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, are pitied because the “Christian truths” had not been revealed to them. Even today missionaries are sent to “heathen” countries to convert the “heathen” to Christianity. In the city of New York missionaries preach to the newly arrived Russian Jews to convert them to Christianity in order to save their souls.

Although the Christian doctrine is today being taught in exactly the same manner as heretofore, promising people eternal salvation for their mere faith in their Savior, the modern idea regarding the “great blessing of Christianity” lays far more stress on the ethics derived from the Christian doctrine than was the case in former times. Formerly it was simply said, whoever believes in our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, will go to heaven and be eternally blessed; whoever denies him will go straight to hell. Nothing in this doctrine has really been changed or can be changed, as long as there is any Christianity left. But, besides this, it is claimed Christianity contains a moral doctrine which is superior to any other ethical teaching. Therefore, Chris-

tianity makes people better and nobler than other people. The spread of Christianity means the uplifting and ennobling of mankind.

Therefore it is the "Christian ethics" which we will have to consider here. If it were true that the Christian doctrine does make people better and nobler, we would, under all circumstances, encourage the spreading of Christianity, regardless of everything that we were forced to bring forward against it. No matter whether a religious doctrine is based on mythological poetry, or whether it is the product of mental derangement, so long as it can be proved that it benefits mankind, that it improves and ennobles human beings, it is our duty to do everything in our power to maintain and uphold this religion and to propagate it as much as possible. Man is but too sorely in need of improvement!

Regarding the influence of Christianity on the morality of man, as it manifests itself in the study of history, we have characterized it sufficiently in the foregoing chapters. Christianity has transformed people either into utterly useless, impotent enthusiasts, who went through life aliens to the world and, like the ascetics and hermits, in their extreme selfishness, did absolutely nothing for the welfare of mankind, or it made them scoundrels and criminals, who, with the "most Christian" popes at their head, stopped at no measures to enrich themselves at the expense of their fellowmen and to satisfy their unbridled passions and wild debaucheries, or it made them religious fanatics whose feeling for right and wrong, for good and evil, was so perverted that they caused thousands and thousands of innocent people to be tortured and burned at the stake; or it made them sanctimonious hypocrites, who pretended to believe what in reality they could not believe. We look in vain through history for this wonderful influence of Christianity, for the Christian ennoblement of mankind. We must, on the contrary, again emphasize the fact that the general morals of the people began to improve only when they had shaken off the yoke of Christianity, and that so far our

experience has been such that we may safely say: The more Christianity, the less morality.

Christianity is, above all else, a doctrine of faith, and its ethical teachings are only a secondary consideration. The most important thing is faith. Faith can accomplish anything; it can lift mountains and throw them into the sea. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ will be saved, no matter what his mode of life has been. For did not Christ promise the murderer on the cross that he would that day be with him in Paradise, only because he believed in him? On the other hand, no kind of ethics can save a man; he can be ever so good; if he does not believe in Jesus Christ, he will be sent to eternal damnation in hell to atone for the crime of lacking in faith.

This is an exceedingly immoral doctrine, which certainly is not apt to improve people or make them better. On the contrary. If the criminal, the murderer, attains heaven through faith, what influence must this doctrine exercise on the actions of men? But aside from this, faith is something which is not dependent on our will. I can force myself to perform a certain action, or to refrain from performing another; but how can I force myself to believe something which I can not believe? If God wanted me to believe a certain thing, he should have given me a brain that was prepared to do so. The brain he has given me simply refuses to believe—how can I help it? Is this doctrine, therefore, not altogether immoral? At best, it makes people miserable bigots, hypocrites, who cast their eyes to heaven and pretend to believe.

As to the moral doctrines which Christ gave the people in his sermons and dialogues, they are mainly only references to the old Jewish doctrines, particularly the Ten Commandments, which God is supposed to have dictated on Mount Sinai. Christ expressly says that people should act according to the words of the Jewish scribes and doctors, not according to their actions, wherein he was probably right. We will return to those Ten Commandments later on; here we wish, first of all, to ascertain wherein the doc-

trine of Christ differed from them, or what it contained that was not already contained in them.

As a result of his mental condition, Christ was in the habit of expressing himself in superlatives. Just as he himself was the Supreme Being, the ruler of all peoples of the earth, the Lord of the universe, so all his other conceptions, too, corresponded to these superlatives. Everything was either the greatest, the best, or so low as to deserve to be sunk in the deepest abyss of hell. In this manner he, as one might say, intensified "God's commandments," whereby they unquestionably lost their true meaning and became almost a parody of their original form. Christ draws a comparison between several of the Ten Commandments and his corresponding doctrine, and in doing so always attempts to go to the Commandments "one better." Thus he generally begins his addresses: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time," and then lets his version follow under the announcement: "But I say unto you."

Thus he discusses the commandment: "Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment." Instead of this he says: "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire." What nonsensical exaggeration! If a person says to his brother, "thou fool," he shall be in danger of the fires of hell? Under certain circumstances one is not only justified but from a sense of duty compelled to call one's brother a fool, if he deserves it. It is one of the main duties of genuine friendship and brotherliness to be sincere enough to tell one's brother the truth and point out his faults to him, and even, upon occasion, tell him that he acted like a fool. But even if one is wrong in one's criticism, even if one's brother has not deserved to be called "a fool," is one therefore to be thrust into the fires of hell? Is this not obviously the purest nonsense?

The next commandment discussed by Christ is: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." "But I say unto you," con-

tinues Christ, "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

This expression contains a psychological impossibility. Marriage is a condition of which much can still be said in spite of all the volumes written on the subject. Marriage, as such, we will not discuss here. One may think on this subject as one chooses, but in this all decent people will agree, that in no civilized communities could people ever give full rein to their sexual passions, like animals, and that the restraint of this passion must be one of the requisites of every civilized community. The commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery," refers directly to the controlling of sexual passion, and is therefore psychologically and socially justified, no matter what form the institution of marriage may take in the future. But Christ's admonition is not directed towards curbing this passion, but towards the passion itself. He says it does not suffice to struggle against and conquer one's passion, but condemns passion itself as a crime. But such a verdict is as absurd as it is unnatural. Under certain circumstances, I can demand of a person that he conquer his thirst and refrain from drinking; but to reproach him for being thirsty would be utterly ridiculous.

To set aside any possible doubt about Christ really meaning this, think of the advice he gives to those whose passion is aroused at the sight of a beautiful woman. He does not advise conquering this passion by energy and will power. No, he advises annihilation of passion by self-mutilation! "But if thy right eye offend thee," he continues, "pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Is this morality? Abominable! This is the greatest immorality and only Christ's mental unsoundness can serve as an excuse for such a doctrine. As is so frequently the case with psychical degenerates, Christ was sexually impotent. This doctrine owes its origin to this deficiency and his delusions of grandeur.

Further on, Christ says: "Ye have heard what hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that

curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Whether Christ intentionally or unintentionally misquotes this passage we will not try to decide. But, as a matter of fact this particular passage reads differently. There is no question of enemies; it is said: "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."<sup>186</sup>

Love for one's neighbor was therefore by no means taught first by Christ, but was one of the most important laws of the old Mosaic doctrine. But the Jews were not the only ones, either, who had such a law. The Greek philosophers, particularly Socrates and Plato, likewise taught the great importance of love for one's neighbor.

By what right, therefore, is this doctrine of love for one's neighbor claimed as belonging exclusively to Christianity? Have the Christians in the course of centuries distinguished themselves by the love they showed their fellowmen? Think of the foregoing chapters and you may answer this question for yourself. Or did Christ improve and perfect that Mosaic doctrine? The Mosaic commandment says: "Thou shalt not avenge, and shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And what does Christ say? "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you," etc. Is this an improvement of the Mosaic commandment? It sounds far more like persiflage to us; as though Christ wished to make fun of this commandment. Is there any sense in telling people to love their enemies? Can any one imagine himself loving his enemies? The commandment, "Thou shalt not avenge" is sensible. As a fact, today, after four thousand years, we are beginning to obey this law, for we now consider it wrong to punish criminals from a spirit of revenge. But the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy enemies," has no sense. Can any one imagine himself loving the murderer of his mother? I may expect a civilized person to be just to his enemies, to treat them as human beings, and not seek to be revenged on them, but to love them? Impossible! This is another of those psychological impos-

<sup>186</sup>Lev. xix: 18.

sibilities which originated in the morbid desire to outdo the existing law.

But does Christ himself obey this law? Does he love his enemies? Does he bless those who curse him? It is by no means necessary to "curse" him to draw down upon one's self his inveterate hatred. Whoever questions his divinity must expiate this doubt by eternal damnation in hell. Whoever offends any one who believes in him shall be thrown into the sea with a millstone around his neck. Is this the way to love one's enemies? Nay, does even his "Heavenly Father" set a good example to the people in carrying out this commandment? Does he love his enemies? He says that he will visit the sons of those that hate him unto the third and fourth generation.<sup>187</sup> What an infamy! How can one punish innocent children for the sins of their forefathers? What kind of a religious doctrine is it that demands of people what their Gods are not even able to do? Evidently it is easier even for the Gods to preach than to practice. We, after all, have reason to be proud of our present civilization, for, according to the utterances of God and Christ, we treat our enemies far more humanely than they did theirs.

Most absurd is Christ's command: "And unto him that smite thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also." What would you think today of a person who really acted in such a ridiculous manner? A man, who, being struck on the right cheek, offers also the left, deserves a thorough whipping. And a person who calls back a thief, who has stolen his coat, to offer him another gift, should have a guardian appointed to take care of him.

Do not the changes which Christ made in the Mosaic laws actually sound like persiflage? Could an intelligent person ever obey such nonsensical commandments? Have they ever been obeyed by any one in the whole world? Therefore, where is the "wonderful, beautiful moral doctrine" of Christ, of which we hear so much? What justifies the Christians in considering their morality the highest and

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<sup>187</sup>Ex. ii: 20, 5.

noblest? Christ's commandment, so frequently quoted: "Love thy neighbor as thyself," dates back to Moses, and what Christ added to it is absurd and impossible to carry out.

Let us return to the Ten Commandments, which God is supposed to have written on the tablets on Mount Sinai. They are taught to children in school; they are supposed to contain the morals which religion exacts of mankind. The first tablet represents less a moral doctrine than one of faith. The commandments in question deal with God. "Thou shalt have no other Gods beside me," etc. Of course, there is no danger of this today; it is difficult enough to believe in one, to say nothing of his threefold being. No one has a desire for more. The real moral principles are contained in the second five: "Honor thy father and thy mother," etc., "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

There is certainly no one who has anything to say against these commandments, but—do they contain any particular moral? Must one be "religious," go to church, believe in God, in order to act accordingly? The commands not to murder nor to steal are two of the fundamental requisites of every orderly commonwealth. All nations who lay the slightest claim to civilization have such laws. Every country has a voluminous penal code, based partly on the old Roman laws, in which a thousand things besides to "murder," "to steal" and "to bear false witness" against one's neighbor are forbidden, and every person who breaks one of these laws may be punished. What, therefore, have those things in common with religion? The Ten Commandments were given to the Jewish people while they were wandering about in the wilderness in a half barbaric state. Probably, in the dire need and stress that must have been upon them, murder and theft were common occurrences, and it is therefore quite natural that Moses in his hallucinations heard God give commandments which above all else dealt with these things. But it is altogether too absurd to claim today that these commandments represent the highest, most divine morality. What good is accomplished by teach-



ing children to babble these commandments? Is any one better because he can recite the Ten Commandments? Must one be a Christian to know that one should not murder nor steal? Are these things not forbidden by the Chinese as well?

Three hundred years ago the Catholic Church added five other commandments to those given to Moses, and established them likewise as dogmatic laws. They are:

1. Thou shalt keep the prescribed holidays.
2. Thou shalt attend High Mass reverently on the same.
3. Thou shalt keep the prescribed fast-days and observe the difference in diet on those days.
4. Thou shalt confess at least at Easter to the priest.
5. Thou shalt take communion at Easter.

None of these commandments has anything to do with morals, they are only ritual precepts, like most of the nonsensical dietary laws and other regulations of conduct which God whispered into the ear of our friend Moses on Mount Sinai.

Therefore the ten, or, according to the Catholics, the fifteen Commandments, contain, with the exception of the admonition to honor one's parents, no moral doctrine, but are made up of rules of faith, ritual precepts and legal prohibitions. The one moral doctrine the importance of which we have already emphasized, is not even contained in the Ten Commandments, that is, the admonition: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It has already been stated that this doctrine is wrongfully called specifically Christian. In connection with this that other expression of Christ, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," is referred to often. Christ is by no means the author of this saying; on the contrary it is of far more ancient origin. It really constitutes one of the six commandments, which were given to Noah's sons. Besides, Christ only quotes these words, as he expressly states, by adding: "This is the law and the prophets." The Greeks also possessed such maxims. Socrates says, in the fourth century, B. C.: "Do not do unto others what would offend you if they did to you." Probably these words are responsible

for the saying which later on Emperor Alexander Severus had inscribed on his palace and several public buildings: "Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris." This corresponds almost word for word to our maxim: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them." Therefore, there is absolutely no reason for regarding this as a specifically Christian principle.

After all, it is immaterial where this expression comes from; the Christian religion is a doctrine of faith and not one of morals. A religion which teaches that one need only believe to be saved and be admitted into the "heavenly kingdom," no matter what kind of life one has led, can not be a moral doctrine. How could possibly those few maxims of Christ and the few paragraphs of the penal code contained in the Ten Commandments form a moral doctrine? Since time immemorial, the greatest philosophers and most ingenious men have tried to set up a moral code that would serve at all times and under all circumstances. They have tried to found such a code on human nature, and thereby make it independent of all conventionalities. These efforts led to the philosophy of Socrates and to the various systems of his great pupils, Plato and Aristotle. The Epicurean and Stoical schools were founded on the same principle. The very formation of the many schools and systems is proof in itself that a moral code that would be decisive and comprehensive for all eternity, can not be set up theoretically. Conceptions of "good" and "bad," of "right" and "wrong" change according to the philosophic views of the different nations at different times. What one nation deemed right and good, others considered wrong and bad, and the more they tried to set up a general moral code to fit all peoples, the farther from the desired goal they seemed to depart. As a result of this fact, a particular philosophical school had been formed, which considered "good" what the rulers in power at the time considered good.

Like all other sciences, philosophy, too, with its moral doctrine, was plunged into a long sleep by Christianity, but when, finally, the unbearable yoke of religious constraint was forcibly shaken off, and a general renaissance of classi-

cal antiquity took place, the old philosophical systems, the Platonic, Aristotelean, Stoical and Epicurean schools, again came to the fore. The many modern philosophical moral doctrines tried to start where the old ones had ceased. They are therefore of "heathen" origin and have nothing whatever to do with Christianity. If there really were such a thing as Christian morality, why did the great thinkers of the recent centuries write voluminous books on the subject? And why, in spite of all this, has it not been possible to set up a universal moral code?

It is not our intention to discuss morality as such at this point. The question of interest to us is whether Christianity, because of its moral doctrine, is indispensable to mankind. We believe, however, that we have sufficiently proven that Christianity does not contain such a doctrine at all. The few utterances of Christ, to which people always refer, and in which the "nobility" and "sublimity" of Christianity are supposed to be found, are first of all not original with Christ, and, secondly, as philosophers have sufficiently proven, there is no single moral law which can be efficient at all times and under all circumstances. Even that so frequently quoted maxim, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," beautiful as it may sound, can not always be carried out and does not fit all circumstances. Do people, perhaps, act according to this command today? One of the most important fundamentals of our present civilization is based on the exact opposite of this maxim, that is, free competition. The principle of this is to clear the field of one's competitors, therefore to do unto others just that which one does not want others to do unto one's self. What would a modern diplomat look like if he acted according to this principle? He would hardly be appreciated by his government!

But even this is immaterial to our purpose. Assuming that Christ had set up new moral principles which would fit all times, what has this to do with Christianity, that is, with the Christian dogma? Could not such principles have been adopted and followed without first shrouding them in a mystical doctrine of faith?

So, then, there is no "Christian Morality." The reason that one nevertheless constantly hears about such a moral doctrine is that, as has already been stated, the concept of Christianity has been so stretched, that altogether unjustifiably the notions of "good" and "noble" have become synonymous with "Christian." If a man squares his shoulders and says: "I am a Christian," he means, "I am a good, noble man," just as the word "Jew" is used to convey the idea that the person so called is guilty of unsavory actions.

Another incentive to individual morality is ascribed to Christianity, through its indirect influence thereon. In so claiming one takes the position that particular motives are necessary, particular hope of reward and fear of punishment, to make mankind obey a moral doctrine, no matter what its nature may be. These, they claim, are indispensable. What would actuate people, so they ask, to lead virtuous lives and to abstain from doing evil, if they were taught that death is the end of all things, that there is no reward after death, that there is no God who watches over us, who knows our innermost thoughts, who rewards the good and punishes the wicked?

It is especially the leaders of the people, the potentates, the sovereigns, who are the ones who insist on the necessity of Christianity, in this respect. They know only one code of ethics for the people, the one so ardently advocated by the great reformers Luther and Melancthon—"obedience to the authorities." This is a charming doctrine. According to this, a good Christian must acquiesce in everything commanded by the "authorities." He must go to church and pray every Sunday, he must believe in our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the "Holy Ghost," or at any rate pretend that he does, and—obey. Whoever does this, will go to heaven and be eternally blessed, but he who disobeys will go to hell, there to be punished with unutterable torture through all eternity, without pity or mercy. What a lot of blockheads there must have accumulated in heaven! In spite of all the tortures, it must be far more tolerable in hell than to spend an eternal life in company with those obedient idiots.

Whether the government be good or bad is not to be judged by the people; they can not understand it any way, for kings are appointed by the Lord. They reign by the grace of God, and if they do anything that seems wicked, we must always bear in mind that their actions are determined by the profound wisdom of God, who either wishes to punish the people, or indirectly, by this apparent wickedness, is leading them to some good end. A good Christian owes obedience to the government, no matter what it demands or does. Even though the courts of "the most Christian" kings, Louis XIV. and XV., looked far more like gigantic brothels than the palaces of mighty rulers, and even though these kings drained the people of the last drop of their blood to cover their mistresses with pearls and diamonds, and to revel in the wildest excesses, the people must never forget that the king is appointed by the grace of God and must be strictly obeyed by all good Christians.

The manners which prevailed at the French court found ready imitators in other countries, particularly in the smaller German courts. On the throne where once a "wise" (Frederick the Wise of Saxony) elector sat, under whose protection Martin Luther could publish his abusive articles against the emperor and the pope, a "strong" prince sat later on, a prince who was at the same time king of Poland, August, the (physically) "strong." This king was physically "strong" indeed! He had three hundred and fifty-four children. Upon one occasion one of his favorites in the army gave up his beautiful mistress to show himself grateful to the king. Some time afterward it was discovered that both his favorite and his mistress belonged to the three hundred and fifty-four. But this has no place here—kings are appointed by the grace of God and the morality of the Christian consists above all things in "obedience to the authorities."

But if it should happen that, in spite of this, the people forget eternal salvation and refuse to obey the king; not only that, if the people, as was the case in France and England, demand the head of the "most Christian" king and take the reins of the government into their own hands—

what, in such a case, does God do? Does he open the gates of heaven and send an overwhelming flood to earth to drown sinful mankind, as in Noah's time? Or does he hurl lightning from heaven, make the earth quake, and annihilate wicked mankind? No! He does nothing of the kind! God destroys mankind by earthquakes only for pastime, in times of peace and prosperity, when human beings live contentedly side by side, when they have committed no wrong against him, as was the case not long ago in San Francisco. But, after those bloody revolutions, after the people succeeded in killing their authorities, God lets the priest in all the churches tell them that they now owe the new government the same obedience they formerly owed the decapitated kings. God does even more. He quietly looks on while all those who did not wish to change their Christian morals, remaining loyal to the royal house, expiate their loyalty by death or by life-imprisonment.

Perhaps God wanted to punish the English people, or lead them into temptation, for after a short time he appointed another king and maintained the throne up to the present day. But it is difficult to divine what God really wanted of his Christian people in France. After the king had been beheaded, the people in rapid succession had to swear fealty to various forms of democratic government, until finally God himself, though not beheaded, was dethroned. After this the French throne was captured by that mighty genius who made the whole world tremble for fifteen years. From one end of Europe to the other echoed the thunder of cannon, hundreds of thousands of human beings met their death on the battlefield. But not only in all the churches of France was it proclaimed as the will of God that the people pray for their emperor and render him obedience; the representative of Christ on earth, the Holy Father Pius VII., came to Paris in person to give his blessing at his marriage to the conqueror of nations. Was it that God was offended because the mighty emperor made the holy father a prisoner, later on, or that he remembered the old royal family, "by the grace of God"? Be that as it may, he withdrew his favor from the powerful conqueror

and let him perish miserably. But in the churches people were now told that there was only one "legitimate royal house" to which alone they were to be obedient, as was the duty of every good Christian. But no sooner had the people yielded to this moral doctrine, than the royal house was again overthrown, and it was once more considered "moral" to obey the government set up by the people and not the king "by the grace of God." And so it went on in this country. The royal house "by the grace of God" alternated with the emperor by the "power and will of God" and the republic "under the protection of God." But the morality of the people always consisted in obeying those in power and in praying for them. The obedient would go to heaven, the disobedient would suffer eternal punishment in hell.

Every attempt to point out the absurdity, or, rather, the wickedness of such a doctrine can naturally be met with the hackneyed phrase: "God's will and God's ways are unfathomable, and it is a sin to doubt their greatness and wisdom." Any one who is willing to think at all logically must realize that this means only that he whose actions are crowned with success acts in every way in the name and according to the will of God. According to this, no action, as such, could be called moral or immoral; only the result could decide this important question. If a person tries to overthrow the government by assassinating the supreme dignitary of the country, the eventual morality is only a question of the result. If the murderer is arrested and convicted of murder, he has committed a serious crime, is considered a miserable criminal, and must expiate his sin by eternal damnation in hell. But if he was clever and prudent enough to attain success in his enterprise, so that he actually succeeds in overthrowing the government and putting himself at its head, as for example Cromwell, we must recognize the will of God in his act. The murderer did his country a great service and eventually will get his reward in heaven.

As to the question whether it is really necessary or even advisable to use the fear of punishment and hope of reward in exhorting the people to be good and honest, one

need only think of the raising of children. Shall a child be taught to tell the truth through fear of punishment, or shall a genuine love of truth be instilled into the child? Shall I tell a child not to steal because it will be punished if it does, or shall I by proper influence produce in the child an actual aversion to such a deed? Shall I be satisfied if my child treats his brothers and sisters kindly because it expects to be rewarded for its kindness, or shall I strive to make such a mode of conduct the result of the character of the child?

But above all, we must condemn most emphatically frightening or threatening children with dismal, mystical things to make them "be good." Foolish mothers who threaten their children with "the black man" or the "bad witch" do them irremediable harm. The very opposite should be done, by guarding children against every foolish superstition. Can any one really respect a person who "does not murder" and "does not steal" because he fears that he will be punished in this or the other world? Can we have anything but contempt for certain narrow-minded millionaires who hope to receive their reward in the other world for their so-called "charities"? The concepts of "God-fearing" and "virtuous" have actually become identical. But this is a great mistake. What we need is men who do not fear anything, neither God nor the devil, nor human beings; men who abstain from doing wrong because they despise it, and who do what is right and just because this alone gives them satisfaction.

People who abstain from doing wrong merely through fear of punishment, as a rule try to get around the law. Their eleventh commandment is: "Thou shalt not be found out." This is the morality to which the principle of fear leads. From this point of view religion offers far more a temptation to do wrong than incentives to do right. The Jews are told that on a certain day of the year God forgives them their sins. So they steal and cheat, trusting that their account with God will be balanced on that high holiday. Catholics believe that when they go to confession the priest will absolve them from their sins. Why then should they not allow themselves a sin here and there, if they will be



absolved any way? Protestants are taught that faith in the Redeemer purifies mankind of all sin; for, by his sacrifice, Christ took the sins of all the believers on himself. Then why not take advantage of this generosity and indulge one's self in a few sins?

Do you really believe that human beings can be made better by such nonsensical doctrines? On the contrary. In the forgoing chapters it has been sufficiently proven that the Christian religion has always exerted an exceedingly unfavorable influence on the morals of mankind. Hard as this may seem, it is nevertheless true—the less Christianity, the higher the morals!

## XII. JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

Regarding the question as to what influence religion has had on the progress of civilization, a glance at Judaism and its relation to other cults is of the greatest importance. No other religion has remained so unchanged and uncorrupted through such a long period of time as that of the Jews. No other religion has exercised such a powerful influence on the civilization of a people. Among the Jews, religion was not merely an important factor of civilization, but, you might almost say, it constituted civilization itself. Through the early inclination of the Jews to join other nations, through the loss of their own nationality, and through the fact that, as a consequence of their orthodox faith, Judaism was preserved, nevertheless, relations were created between the Jews and those people with whom they lived, which are in many respects instructive, both as to their morality and their influence on civilization. Furthermore, you must bear in mind that the Christians are a sect of the Jews, and that Christianity would be inconceivable without Judaism.

So long as the Jews were an independent nation their civilization was so closely entwined with their religion that, as has been said, these two concepts were almost identical. The religion of the Jews was not, as that of other nations, a means to an end, that is, to live, but was, on the contrary, the purpose of life. According to their theocratic view, God was the Lord and King of the nation, and to serve him was the purpose of their existence.

That, under such circumstances, all their reflections and aspirations had to center around this one subject is self-evident. Whatever was not of a religious nature pertained only to the satisfying of the necessary wants of life. Just as beauty was the guiding ideal of the Greeks in all their

actions, just as power, justice, and order were the goal of the endeavors of the Romans, so the mind of the Jews was concentrated on religion.

The law: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images," deprived the Jews of the fine arts. Painting and sculpture did not exist for them. Their music and poetry were confined to hymns and songs of praise, in which the greatness and goodness of Jehovah were sounded. Their science consisted in studying and expounding the holy Scriptures and traditions. Their philosophy, which naturally assumed the existence of the only eternal God as a fundamental fact, was thereby closed to any further development.

The pride and contempt with which the Jews looked down upon all other nations had an entirely logical foundation. Since they believed in their "only eternal God," they had to believe in his "revelations," for these were the only basis of his existence. They had to believe that they were the chosen people, to whom, alone, God had revealed himself; that he had made them his people, at whose head he stood as the divine leader. If one believes such a thing—and this is what, even at present, Jews and Christians do believe—is one not justified in being proud? If today God would "reveal" himself to a small handful of people, and assure them that he has chosen them as his people, would they not be proud? For example, let us assume that the heavens suddenly opened and God in his own person spoke to the citizens of Hoboken, N. J., telling them that he had chosen them to be his own people, that henceforth he would lead them himself, that he loves only them and is not at all interested in the rest of mankind. Would not the good citizens of Hoboken be filled with pride, and look down pityingly on all other people? But this very pride with which the Jews looked down on all those of another faith, called down upon them the hatred and contempt of their fellow-men, giving rise to the inimical relationship between them which has persisted up to the present day.

The Jews possess one quality which was peculiar to them even at the time when they were still an independent nation,

that is, the faculty of acclimatizing themselves quickly and easily, wherever they may be. Long before the birth of Christ, they were scattered over the whole world, and had become part of all civilized nations. Philo mentions Jewish congregations in Thessaly, Boeotia, Macedonia, Ætolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, as well as in other parts of the Peloponnesus, and on the Islands of Crete and Eubœa. In the Gospel St. Luke speaks of Jewish settlements in Salamis, Philippi, Thessaly, Berœa, Athens, Corinth, and Rome. During his great missionary journeys, Paul proclaimed "the word of Christ" first in all the synagogues of the Jews, which were to be found in all the larger places. The Jews everywhere accustomed themselves quickly to the habits and laws of the country, and flourished and prospered wherever they went.

But in consequence of their religious peculiarity, the Jews always remained separated from other nations. While the Egyptians, Medæans, Persians, Assyrians, Greeks and Romans quickly mixed with one another under proper conditions, to form a united nation, the Jews always remained Jews, no matter how completely they acclimatized themselves to the country in external matters. Their religious laws related to all the actions of every-day life, even to the partaking of food, in consequence of which they were not allowed to eat in the company of those of a different faith, or even to eat in their presence. Therefore, while in public life they became Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, *et al.*, in their hearts—as well as in their habits—they remained Jews. Their mode of life, as well as their view of the world, remained so peculiar that amalgamation with other nations was not possible. In Rome, Jews succeeded in filling important official positions; there were Jews of great influence and importance at the courts of the emperors, but they always remained Jews.

This trait of the people has persisted to the present day. The Jews are scattered throughout the world at the present time. Everywhere they adopt the customs and habits of the country in which they happen to be; they make their living wherever they are, they are successful in every

sphere of life, but they always remain Jews. In multitudes they immigrated to America and in a short time became American citizens. The following generation lift themselves from the dregs of the people to positions of respect and honor in all branches of human endeavor. But while Germans, Italians, and Irishmen strip off their national peculiarities and become part of the American nation, the Jews always remain Jews.

The hatred which developed with the origin of Christianity between Jews and Christians, is deeply rooted in the character of both religions. Religion itself offered its adherents the alternative, either to hate and despise their fellowmen or to doubt the divine origin of its doctrine.

Monotheism was the quintessence of Judaism. The Jewish religion differed from the faiths of all other nations, in its doctrine of the "only, eternal God." The command, "I am the Lord thy God. . . Thou shalt have no other Gods before me," filled the Jews with the holiest reverence for their God and at the same time engendered in them the deepest contempt for everything that in any way opposed this command. How, then, could they be expected to accept a doctrine which added two deities to this only God, one of them a person from their own circle, the other a mystical, incomprehensible "Holy Ghost"?

Nevertheless, a great number of Jews were persuaded to acknowledge Christ as the long expected Messiah. A doctrine that corresponded to this was formulated, and the Jews came in hordes to join the new faith. In Jerusalem alone, the Apostles found five thousand believers. In all the cities within and without the Jewish empire, the Jews founded Christian congregations, so that Christianity had already become fairly widespread before the heathens were approached on the subject of the new doctrine. The first fifteen bishops of the city of Jerusalem were circumcized Jews. Christianity in its original form, was, therefore, only a modification of Judaism. Its adherents, according to Christ's own intentions, remained Jews, only with the difference that the believers saw in Christ the Messiah promised them by the Prophets. All Jewish precepts, all their

ceremonies and laws, were retained unchanged; in short, Christians were and remained Jews.

But then came that turning point in the history of Christianity, which was to create the unbridgable abyss between Jews and Christians. In their efforts to propagate Christianity as much as possible, the disciples decided to drop all those laws and ceremonies that might prevent the heathen from joining Christianity. Above all, circumcision and the dietary laws were abolished. But just these things were most sacred to the Jews. Absurd as circumcision was as a religious rite, the Jews firmly believed in the divine origin of this custom. What right, then, had those common fishermen to upset those old, sacred laws? Was not Christ himself a circumcized Jew? Christ had never said anything against the Jewish customs! On the contrary, he advised his disciples to guide themselves "by the words" of the scribes, much as he hated them for their unbelief.

From their viewpoint, the Jews were right. If God himself had proclaimed the commands and laws, by what right could human beings abolish them? God had expressly commanded that the Jews should even have their slaves circumcized, and now this sacred institution was to be dropped altogether, merely to make it easy for the heathen to adopt the new doctrine. For what purpose had God given the many laws and precepts as to diet, sacrifices, and all other things, on Mount Sinai, if they were now to be set aside and disregarded? Was one to assume, all at once, that Moses had deceived the people? Was a fisherman to be endowed with more authority than Moses? While the abolition of the old rites made admission to Christianity easier for the heathen, it repelled the Jews, so that they, from this time forth, joined the new doctrine only very sparingly, and looked down upon the deserters from the old faith with hatred and contempt.

The hatred felt by the new Christian congregation for the Jews, was likewise founded on their religion. The essence of Christianity was the belief in the divinity of Christ. For whoever did not believe in him, it were better, as Christ said, that a millstone were hung about his neck

and he be drowned. Therefore, the mere fact that the Jews remained loyal to their old faith and refused to acknowledge the divinity of Christ was bound to draw down upon them the bitterest hatred of the Christians. This hatred was intensified by the notion that the Jews had crucified the Messiah, the Lord, Jesus Christ.

This reproach, with which the Christians assail the Jews to the present day, is as unfounded as it is illogical. In the first place, the Romans crucified Jesus, not the Jews. The Jews were not even authorized to pronounce or execute the sentence of death. They accused Christ to the Roman government of calling himself King, inciting the people to disobedience against the authorities, and insulting and abusing the highest officials, as well as the high priests, in the most shameful manner. These accusations were based on facts, and by reason of them Christ was sentenced to death on the cross by the Roman government.

But aside from this, it is the most nonsensical contradiction imaginable, on the one hand to believe Christ a God, and on the other to claim that the Jews had killed him. Can a God be killed? Christ, too, is supposed to have arisen again and to have dwelt on earth forty days. How, then, can one say that the Jews killed him? But, furthermore, none of this could have happened against the will of God. Nay, everything is even supposed to have been predestined. Christ is said to have been sent by God to earth, to expiate the sins of mankind by shedding his blood for them. Christ himself spoke about this to his disciples, and told them that his Heavenly Father had decided upon all this. And in the face of this, the Jews are to be reproached for having crucified him? Of all the enormous contradictions, this is the most gigantic one. Had Christ not been crucified, there could be no Christianity.

Thus we see that religion, as such, instead of engendering love for one's neighbor, does the very opposite. That bitter hatred, the evil consequences of which are evident to the present day, is not rooted in the heart of humanity, but in Judaism and Christianity.

In spite of their peculiarities, due to their religion, the

Jews were not only tolerated in the Roman Empire, but at times were very welcome there. Julius Cæsar, who had forbidden the practice of strange cults, made a particular exception in favor of the Jews. Augustus was so considerate towards the Jews that he would not allow the distribution of corn on Saturday, so that they might not thereby be embarrassed. Under Tiberius there occurred a number of individual improprieties which tended to the disadvantage of Jews. The later emperors, with the exception of Domitian, Trajan, and Adrian, were favorably disposed to the Jews. The cruel persecutions of the Christians were not, as is often wrongly maintained, directed against the Jews, but were caused by social-political conditions, and were directed against the Christians themselves. The position of the Jews in the Empire became a desperate one only after the victory of Christianity. It was with the appearance of the celebrated "Christian love" that the deadly hatred towards the Jews, and their consequent persecutions, came into being.

At the beginning it was less personal aversion between Jews and Christians which led to their enmity, than a direct instigation thereto on the part of the priests. In their orthodox fanaticism, they considered it their most sacred duty to combat all infidels. Those fiendish persecutions which the Christians were compelled to suffer at the hands of the "heathen" Romans, and which even today are considered characteristic of the brutal "heathenism," were now practiced by the Christians and considered acts of "noble Christianity, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." In this, there is a certain excuse for the inhuman cruelty committed by the Christian priests, from the highest to the lowest. It would be horrible to think that mere personal hatred should have actuated the most prominent men during many centuries in giving over thousands of human beings to unspeakable tortures and death.

There is something reconciling in the fact that what they did appeared to them a pious deed; that it was not bestial perversion that spoke in them, but religious superstition; that perhaps the words of Christ hovered before



them, telling them to put millstones around the necks of infidels and throw them into the sea. Yes, we will be glad to let that religious doctrine serve as an excuse for misled mankind—but must we then not the more severely condemn this same religion?

That this is actually so, that it was only religious fanaticism that led to those cruel persecutions of the Jews, that the Jews were really not persecuted as such but were looked upon as infidels and deniers of Christ, is shown quite clearly by the attitude towards them at the time of the crusades. When the cry “to arms” resounded from one end of Europe to the other, when the battle against the “infidels” was to be fought, it was considered a pious deed to begin with the Jews at home. Whole congregations, that had dwelt in peace and harmony, were put to death. To kill Jews, to burn and mutilate them, were considered “noble, Christian deeds” for which one would be rewarded in heaven.

Every ascension to the throne of a particularly “pious” prince, every important achievement in the domain of the history of the Church, was celebrated by persecuting and abusing the Jews.

To judge correctly the influence that Christianity has had on civilization, it is therefore important to realize that the many persecutions of the Jews that took place in all countries, were not practiced in spite of Christianity, that they were not carried on, as may be imagined, in spite of that religion which is called the religion of love, and which commands that one should love his enemies. It is true, this is commanded, but this same Christ who said “love thy neighbor as thyself,” at the same time urged that infidels should be drowned, that Sodom and Gomorrah were to be more fortunate on the day of Judgment than they who denied him; that all who did not believe in him would end in hell, where there would be wailing and gnashing of teeth. No, not in spite of the Christian religion, but because of it, those many persecutions of unbelieving Jews took place. Why, there was a society to which the noblest of the aristocracy deemed it an honor to belong, whose business

and life-purpose it was to murder "infidels"—that is, the Knights of Malta.

If you stop to think of the fanaticism with which the Christians spilled the blood of their Christian brethren for trifling differences of faith, if you think of the devastating wars they fought among themselves during many centuries, wherein only dogmatic disputes were in question; if you recall the cruelties and barbarities of the Inquisition, which were carried on for seven hundred years and made the world a veritable hell, these persecutions of the Jews appear almost mild, in spite of their furious bestiality. In fact, they are so completely in accordance with the character of the Christian doctrine that you hardly can imagine true Christianity without them. What is really far more astonishing than the cruelty of the "religion of love," is the fact that in spite of all this the Jews were preserved in large numbers in all countries. In view of the fanatical fury with which they were everywhere persecuted, as well as of the fact that they were always without weapons wherewith to offer an armed resistance, you would think that they could easily have been destroyed and extirpated altogether. If you recall the numerous strong and powerful nations, which in the course of history have vanished completely from the face of the earth, the preservation of the Jews seems almost miraculous.

Far worse than the sporadic "Jew-baiting" in which the people, on command of their leaders, waded in the blood of their fellowmen, were the oppressions and insults continually heaped upon the Jews.

The chief effort of the Christian clergy was always directed to keeping the people in a state of ignorance and stupidity. The enormous contradictions and impossibilities contained in the Bible were too dangerous to be allowed to have their inevitable effect on the people, and it was therefore always considered expedient to forbid the laity to read the Bible—a law that is maintained in the Catholic Church until the present day. Among the Jews the very opposite was the case. With them unfamiliarity with the Scriptures was a crime against God. It was one of the religious pre-

cepts to learn to read, merely for the purpose of studying the Bible. The better versed one was in the Bible and the Talmud, the more one was respected by one's fellowmen, the more pleasing to Jehovah, the only, eternal God.

Since all their interests were centered on the Holy Scriptures, the conversation of the Jews generally referred to religious matters. Naturally, the Christian priests considered such an influence exceedingly dangerous for the masses. The Jews were far more practiced in debating than their Christian fellow-citizens, and when, therefore, religious controversies took place between them, the Jew usually came out ahead.

There were only two remedies for this. Either the Jews must be expelled or killed, or all intercourse between Jews and Christians would have to be interdicted. Both remedies were exhaustively tried by the clergy. The priests instigated the people to kill or persecute their Jewish fellow-citizens with the cry: "Expel the crucifiers." Where this did not succeed, they resorted to the latter remedy, and strictly forbade their congregations all intercourse with the Jews.

Since some fairly plausible reasons for all this had to be given to the people, they invented all those wild accusations in which there was not even a shadow of truth. They invented the legend of the ritual child-murder; they claimed that the Jews poisoned the wells and springs; they accused the Jews of having desecrated the Host; they attempted to convince the people that the Jews were in collusion with the devil, and much more of like nature.

Because of such accusations, the strictest orders were issued, forbidding all association between Jews and Christians. The Jews had to live in special "ghettoes," they had to wear a badge by which they could immediately be recognized; they were not allowed to visit certain parts of the city, such as public promenades; they were not permitted to bathe in the rivers used by Christians, and above all else, they should in no way associate with Christians.

To marry a Jew was pronounced a despicable stain. A Christian who kept a Jewish mistress was burned alive.

The people were made to believe that the blood of Jews was black and poisonous and that a pestilential odor emanated from it. In the year 1347, an edict was issued whereby houses of illfame in Avignon were regulated and all comforts described to the minutest details. Therein it was expressly stated that Jews were forbidden, under severe penalties, to enter these houses. There were certain parts in the prisons set aside for Jews, so that they should not come in contact with Christians. Even in executions, they were kept apart, Jews being hung between two dogs, head downwards. "Saint" Thomas Aquinas set up the doctrine that it was perfectly legitimate to take their property away from Jews and distribute it among the people or the poor.

Even as late as the eighteenth century, an edict was issued in Rome against the Jews, which was in perfect accord with these ideas. Of the forty-four paragraphs, the thirty-first reads as follows: "Jews and Christians are forbidden to play, eat, drink together, hold intercourse or exchange confidences of ever so trifling a nature with one another. Such shall not be allowed in palaces, houses, vineyards, in the streets, in taverns, in neither shops nor any other place. Nor shall the tavern-keeper, inn-keeper, nor shop proprietor permit any converse between Jews and Christians. The Jews who offend in this matter shall incur the penalties of ten scudi and imprisonment; Christians, a similar fine and corporal punishment."

Had the Reformation been what certain historians are pleased today to represent it, that is, a general "improvement" (reform in the true sense of the word), an advance in civilization, it would certainly have made that command of the Old and New Testament: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," exercise a greater influence on the actions of mankind; also the attitude toward one's enemies, even though not transformed into love, would have become more just and humane, as we try to make it today, though not from Christian but from generally humane motives. Instead of this, the Reformers showed an intolerance towards those who differed from their faith which far surpassed everything that was ever exhibited before. The

fanaticism and hatred with which not only Protestants and Catholics, but the various Protestant sects fought against one another, beggars all description. If such feelings were harbored against "brother Christians," who differed only in certain dogmatic precepts, how intense must have been the hatred against the infidel Jews, who scorned the most sacred faith in the Messiah! Luther advised "setting on fire all synagogues and razing them to the earth," destruction of their houses, taking away of their property, and exiling them from the country.

But you must always bear in mind that this hatred was exclusively directed toward the "infidels," the deniers of Christ. The attacks were not directed against the Jews, as such, but against Judaism. The fanaticism with which Luther abused the Jews was of the same character and was the result of the same feelings which caused him to heap abuse and execration on the popes, the Catholic priests, the leaders of other Protestant sects, the king of England, and even the German emperor. Just as he called the Duke of Saxony "the Saxon pig," the king of England a "damned liar," the popes "accursed dogs," so he always spoke of the Jews as "swine."

Hatred and contempt were, therefore, directed against only the religion. As soon as the Jews were baptized and adopted Christianity, they received the same rights and privileges all their older Christian brethren enjoyed. Of course, care had to be taken that the Jews did not take this step merely for the sake of certain advantages, while still remaining Jews at heart; they were expected to become Christians from purest conviction. As the Jews, in great numbers, went over to Christianity, a system of espionage was established in countries where the Inquisition raged, such as Spain and Portugal, for the purpose of watching lest the "new Christians" secretly observed the Jewish holidays or practiced any other Jewish ceremonies. Such things were deemed the greatest crimes, and the prisons of the Inquisition were filled with "judaizing new Christians" who were unable to drop the old customs and traditions so quickly. When a "Christian nuovo" intimated that he

considered it right to abstain from eating pork, this was deemed sufficient cause to bring him before the court of the Inquisition.

Words are inadequate to describe the barbarity and cruelty with which the Jews were persecuted by the "ennobled Christians" in all countries. Who would today believe it possible that nursing infants were torn from their mothers' breasts and impaled on the points of swords? That innocent women were whipped, naked, through the streets? That thousands of defenseless people, without weapons, were butchered? That children were taken from their parents and made slaves? That thousands and thousands of persons were bereft of their property and in their beggared state exiled from the country, and that all this was done in the name of that religion which boasts of being the religion of love, the alleged doctrine of which teaches not only to love one's neighbor, but also to love one's enemy as one's self?

That, in spite of these frightful tortures and attempts at extirpation, the Jews have still maintained their existence, that the Christians did not succeed in exterminating this handful of physically defenseless people from the face of the earth, is, as has been said, one of the greatest wonders in the history of the world. But what kind of an existence did they maintain?

By nature, the Jews are an industrious, persevering people, who, when conditions permitted, always tried to engage in all the branches of industry existing at various periods of history. How difficult the accomplishment of their efforts in these matters was made for them, how it was made well-nigh impossible, is a well-known fact. Forcibly cut off from all intercourse with their Christian fellow-citizens, huddled together in narrow, dirty ghettos, excluded from public schools and universities, restrained and hindered in all movements and undertakings, burdened with heavy taxes and duties, the Jews truly had a difficult position in the struggle for existence. But, in spite of all these hindrances, we find Jews in all branches of human endeavor, wherever they were not forcibly prevented from taking part

in them. In countries and at times when the feeling towards them was more liberal, they were engaged in carrying on every handicraft and every branch of industry, in the same proportion as their Christian fellow-citizens.

But such liberty is exceptional in the history of the Jews. As soon as they seemed particularly successful in any branch, they were forced to give it up. Thus, for example, the production of cloth and woollen goods was one of the greatest industrial branches of the Middle Ages. When the Jews began to be successful in this business in various places, such as Majorca, they were allowed to continue manufacturing these articles only after having been baptized. With the beginning of the guilds of the Middle Ages, the Jews were gradually altogether excluded from practicing any handicraft. Without belonging to a guild, no one was allowed to carry on a handicraft, and Jews were not admitted to these guilds.

Thus, even in times of peace, existence was made harder and harder for the Jews. It really had gone so far that the practice of every regular branch of employment was forbidden them. Of course, there were always exceptions to these severe laws, but it was by these very exceptions that the rule was proved. Forced by necessity, prevented from pursuing any legitimate branch of industry, the Jews were at last driven to a trade which was not only considered immoral, religiously as well as socially, but was looked upon as a crime—that is, money-lending, “usury.”

It is one of the most peculiar phenomena in the history of civilization, that a transaction which today forms one of the most fundamental elements on which our modern civilization is built, was in former centuries regarded as one of the most detestable crimes. We can not imagine a well-organized commonwealth or State, today, in which lending money at interest would be forbidden. All great enterprises, in fact, every trade and commerce, use this method of carrying on business, as one of the main factors. Even the State itself could not exist today without this system. What State government could today do justice to its citizens without legal loans?

By men like Adam Smith and Hume, the legitimacy of interest was proven in a scientific manner. Money is not, as Aristotle erroneously maintained, sterile by nature, but is, on the contrary, continuously productive. Today this seems so self-evident to us that we scarcely understand how, until only a short time ago, quite the opposite opinions were prevalent. Still, Bentham had to resort to the following argument to refute his opponents: "If the borrower," he says, "buys bulls and cows with the borrowed money, and these have calves worth ten times as much as the borrowed capital, this can scarcely be called sterile."

Nevertheless, the lending of money for pecuniary profit was regarded as a crime. The word "usury" did not imply, as it does today, a particularly high rate of interest, but interest as such. Every one who loaned money and received more in return than he had lent, was a usurer; whether he demanded one per cent. or fifty per cent., was entirely immaterial. Here are a few definitions of the word "usury," as they were given in the works on Canonical Rights: "*Usura est pretium usus pecunie mutuatae.—Lucrum immediate ex mutuo proveniens—Usura est cum quis plus exigat in pecunia aut in aliqua re quam dederit.*" Melancthon gave the following definition: "*Usura est lucrum supra sortem exactum tantum propter officium mutationis.*"

Merely lending, as a business, for the purpose of gaining profit, was, therefore, a crime. Usury was not only regarded as an ecclesiastical crime, but was also, so far as the Church could influence the legislators, a civil one, and it was especially singled out as one that should be investigated with torture.<sup>188</sup>

The Council of the Lateran, which was called by Alexander III. in the year 1179, decreed that no usurer be permitted to approach the altar, that he was to be denied the last sacrament in the hour of his death, and that he should not receive Christian burial. Usury was condemned

<sup>188</sup>W. E. H. Lecky. *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*. London, 1865. Second Edition II., page 283.



in the same way by twenty-eight other councils and seventeen popes.<sup>189</sup> But in all this, you must bear in mind that by usury all lending of money for a compensation was understood, no matter how great or how small the rate of interest.

Thus, by excluding the Jews from every legitimate branch of industry, they were forced to resort to this calling. It is an absolute misrepresentation of facts to claim continually that the Jews have a natural bent for trading with money. Even among the Jews this trade was originally looked upon with a much greater contempt than among other people. "A usurer," says a Talmudic rabbi, "is like a murderer, for the crimes of both are equally irreparable."<sup>190</sup> On the other hand, remarkable as it may seem, Christ praises usury as a noble and good deed, and condemns him who did not practice it. To the servant who earned ten pounds with one, the Lord said: "Well done, thou good, faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful in very little, have thou authority over ten cities." In the same way he praises the second servant who with one pound made five. But the servant who merely saved the one pound without earning any interest with it, he called a wicked and slothful servant, and said to him: "Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank exchangers, and then at my coming I might have required mine own with usury." Thereupon he commanded that the one pound be taken from the delinquent servant and given to the one who had ten. Upon the protest that the latter had enough with ten pounds, he said: "That unto every one which hath shall be given . . . and from him that hath not even that which he hath shall be taken away from him."<sup>191</sup> Of course, here again it will be said: This was not meant so; this must be construed symbolically. Every one is at liberty to think about it as he pleases. He may interpret as much "Christian love" into it as he finds possible. But the fact remains that the Jews were brutally forced to the business

<sup>189</sup>Concina, *Adversus Usuram*, pp. 112-113.

<sup>190</sup>Cited from Israel Abraham's *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*. Philadelphia, 1897.

<sup>191</sup>Luke xix: 12-16.

of money-lending, being deprived of every other means of earning a living. He who has any regard for historical truths and is interested in the development of civilization, should bear this fact in mind.

This entire matter is of the utmost importance to the development of civilization, inasmuch as the systematic lending of money for legitimate interest forms the basis of the great commerce of the world, without which we can not, today, imagine a civilization. "As it is quite certain that commercial and industrial enterprise can not be carried on on a large scale without borrowing, and as it is equally certain that these loans can be effected only through paying for them, in the shape of interest, it is no exaggeration to say that the Church has been a curse to the material development of civilization. So long as her doctrine of usury was believed in and acted upon the arm of industry was paralyzed, the expansion of commerce was arrested, and all the countless blessings that have flowed from them were withheld."<sup>192</sup> In the same strain Montesquieu says: "Ainsi nous devons aux speculations des Scholastiques tous les malheurs qui ont accompagné la destruction du commerce."<sup>193</sup>

Thus we are confronted with the peculiar fact that through the malice, hatred, and persecutions of the Christian Church, the Jews were forced to become the founders of one of the most important and essential bases of modern industry and commerce; but that because of this founding, to which they were forcibly driven, the Jews have been covered with abuse and contempt; that gradually the word "Jew" has become synonymous with the concept of usury.

And while the Jews founded the systematic business of money-lending, such as, in an immeasurably higher degree, is carried on today by the great national banks and the various governments; while the Jews, in a strict business way, loaned money at interest—what did they do, the high dignitaries of the Church and the State, what did the popes and cardinals, the emperors, princes and kings, what did the valiant knights—the dukes, the counts and

<sup>192</sup>W. E. H. Lecky II., p. 286. <sup>193</sup>Esprit des Lois lib. XXI., 20.

barons—what did all those do who condemned with such deep contempt, such utter disgust the miserable “usury” of the Jews? They surely were all in need of money. Without money, the knights could build no castles, could hire no soldiers, could carry on no warfare. Without money, the emperors and kings could not maintain their princely households, could wage no wars, could conquer no countries. Without money, the popes and cardinals could build no palaces, could keep no harems, could celebrate no orgies. Was there any one who disdained money? Oh, no! Every one longed for money with equal greed and desire.

While the Jews carried on the despised business of money-lending, from which our industry and commerce have developed, the valiant “robber-knights” fell upon the merchant, traveling peaceably on the highway, to steal his property, and, in case he resisted, to murder him and his escort. Oh, but this was an aristocratic business, this was a chivalrous, a Christian deed. The princes not only despoiled their people in every conceivable way, but stopped at no measure whatsoever to obtain money. As the commanders of the Roman army enthusiastically welcomed every change of emperors, because they knew how to profit thereby, so the German electors regarded the election of an emperor as a “business,” from which they strove to make as much money as possible. They not only allowed themselves to be bribed by the candidate, selling their votes to the highest bidder, but took whatever they could get from all the candidates, and then voted for the one who had paid the most and from whom the most was to be expected in the future.

Charles I., of Bohemia, who ascended the throne of the German Empire as Charles IV., is said to have given every Elector 100,000 gulden for his vote.<sup>194</sup> The receipt of the Elector of Trier, dated July 12, 1376, is still extant. Such was the honor of the princes in financial matters. To lend money at interest was a despicable, punishable deed, but to steal and to accept bribes were the open customs among knights and princes.

<sup>194</sup>Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini *De Ortu et Historia Bohemorum, Opera Omnia*, Basel, 1551.

Emperor Maximilian was by no means the worst kind of a man, but what were his views in money-matters? He was not ashamed to accept from the king of England many thousands of pounds, promising to go to Calais at a given time with a certain number of troops to assist the king, and then quietly pocketing the money without fulfilling the promise for which it was paid. Such things were quite decent and aristocratic.

When Henry VIII., on the advice of Cardinal Wolsey, hired twenty thousand Swiss soldiers to conquer Milan and avenge Marignano, under the leadership of Emperor Maximilian, the greatest care had to be taken to keep the money from Maximilian, for, so Pace writes, every time the king's money was within the reach of the emperor, he at once appropriated some of it, either by force or by false promises to pay it back. The accusation was justified by the command given by Maximilian to his daughter, Margaretha, to take possession of Henry's money, as soon as he heard that it was on the way to Switzerland. The emperor, says Julius II., is careless and unreliable, and constantly begs money of others, to spend it on his chamois hunts.<sup>195</sup>

But what did the popes, the cardinals and archbishops do to secure the enormous sums of money necessary for the satisfying of their sensual pleasures and extravagances? In previous chapters we have dwelt on the gigantic swindle that was carried on "in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ," the trade in indulgences. But this was only a small branch of the industry of the powerful clergy, who had managed, at times, to find themselves in possession of nearly half of the entire real estate. The papal financial methods constituted the highest degree of corruption that can be imagined. The innumerable official positions in the enormous system of the Church, from the highest prelate to the lowest laborer of a village congregation, were all purchasable. Not only the great cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, but all the members of the clergy, as well as the entire army of assistant officials—the notaries, secretaries, chancery clerks, *et al.*, had to pay for their positions. Consequently, since it

<sup>195</sup>A. F. Pollard, Henry VIII. Goupil & Co., Paris, 1902.

was necessary for those concerned to make great pecuniary sacrifices to rise to a remunerative position, they considered themselves justified in pursuing a similar mode of raising money from those under them. Every office had to pay tribute to the one above it, and after all it was, of course, the people who had to pay for the whole business. "A prominent role was played in the budget of the curia by the confirmation fees, that is, the tribute which the ecclesiastical dignitaries who were new in office had to pay for the papal ratification. Already in the thirteenth century these had amounted to 4,000 fl. in the bishopric Brixen. Later on the taxes were materially increased. A confirmation fee of 10,000 fl. had to be paid for the archbishoprics of Mainz, Trier, and Salzburg, and as much as 12,000 for that of Rowen."<sup>196</sup> These "confirmation fees" naturally were nothing but the price of the purchasable ecclesiastical positions. With every change, at every advancement, this fee had to be paid, for which, of course, the poor people had to bleed.

"Just as most of the offices and positions in the curia were purchasable, so the benefices became, more and more, a regular merchandise. It even went so far that the sale of the more profitable benefices for a certain commission was given to the large commercial houses, such as the Fuggers, who, after the death of an Augsburg choir-master, took charge of his benefices. They were then often resold, and perhaps by the new purchasers rented to the highest bidder. Wimpeling knew a priest who owned twenty-four benefices, among which were eight canonicates, without himself attending to a single one. Capito even tells of Jakot, a canon of Strassburg, that he managed to get possession of a hundred benefices and carried on a regular trade in them."<sup>197</sup>

If we consider the different methods of acquiring money as they have been described here, with regard to their morality and legality, from our present point of view, it is quite evident that every one who should act in the same way to-

<sup>196</sup>History of Socialism in Individual Representations by Karl Kautsky, Stuttgart, 1895.

<sup>197</sup>F. V. Bezold, History of the German Reformation, Berlin, 1890.

day would either, like the robber-knights lying in ambush on the highways, end in the electric chair, or, like the other gentlemen, would occupy permanent quarters in the penitentiary. The only ones whose methods of earning money, according to our present ideas, were not only entirely ethical and legal, but were even absolutely indispensable, are the despised Jews with their money-lending business, with their "usury."

This fact is of the greatest importance in forming a correct opinion on the development of our civilization and also of the moral feelings of mankind. Here we have a class of people who, in "Christian love," were excluded from every branch of industry, who were thereby forced to pursue a business which was forbidden by their own law, and which was considered contemptible and criminal, but which, nevertheless, gradually proved to be a social necessity without which our present civilization can not even be imagined.

But what is really pathetic in all this, is the fact that Christendom is not only far from admitting this mistake, but that it continues even today to identify the Jews with dishonest usury in spite of the course of history disclosing the very opposite; that is, that the Jews carried on a perfectly honorable and legitimate business, while the nobility and the clergy acquired their fortunes by robbery, thievery, oppression, corruption and murder.

As unjust as it is to reproach the Jews with money-lending as a crime, as unfounded is the notion that they possess a natural bent for this business. It has been sufficiently demonstrated that they were forced to pursue it. A further proof of the falsity of this claim is offered by the conduct of the Jews wherever constraint and inhibition were removed, and where they obtained the same chances as their fellow-citizens. Wherever this occurred, the opposite has always been complained of; that is, that the Jews "shoved themselves in everywhere," that they were to be found in all professions, and that their competition was felt in all vocations.

The hatred and aversion towards the Jewish money-lender of former centuries had a special foundation. To-

day the rate of interest is legally regulated. It is no longer optional with the individual but is dependent on established laws. This was very different in former times. The demand for interest on borrowed money was called "usury," no matter whether the rate of interest was high or low. Of a regular, legalized rate of interest there could therefore be no question. The money-lender made the price for his loan, just as the merchant put the price on his goods. Just as the price of all merchandise is regulated by competition, according to the law of supply and demand, so money, too, as merchandise had its price, which was dependent on the same factors as those determining transactions in other goods. The fact that money-lending at interest was an illegal and despicable transaction, made lendable money considerably scarcer than would otherwise have been the case, and by this scarcity of supply the price naturally, in the form of interest, had to rise.

Another factor, no less important in the regulation of the price of merchandise, is the risk that has to be taken by the merchant in disposing of the goods. Every merchant sells his wares cheaper for cash than if he must extend credit. In selling on credit, the risk is again dependent on two factors: First, on the financial responsibility and the character of the purchaser, and, secondly, on the legal measures by which the creditor is protected. Exporters who, for example, today send their goods to foreign countries, where they have the benefit of little or no protection and are therefore entirely dependent on the honesty of the purchaser, naturally increase the price of their merchandise. This was the position in which the Jews found themselves in reference to their aristocratic customers, the counts and barons. The usurer had no legal protection. On the contrary, he plied a forbidden trade. If it suited the noble count to have the troublesome Jew, with his note that was due, driven from the grounds of his castle with whips and dogs, the Jew had no redress, could employ no measures to rescue what was rightfully his. Nay, he was ridiculed and laughed at, and might be imprisoned for practicing "usury."

In view of the great danger of losing his goods alto-

gether, the Jew had to increase the price on them, or, in other words, the Jew was forced by the circumstances to lend his money only at a high rate of interest. In place of the legal protection denied him, the Jew learned to secure his money by cunning and craft. He studied the character and environment of his customers, he knew how to become confidentially acquainted with their family affairs, with their every day habits and their social position; his whole mind was bent on getting his customers into his power, through fine manipulations, through knowledge of their indiscretions, and through threats, thereby insuring himself against the loss of his money. The Jewish money-lender of former centuries, therefore, became a particular type, a peculiar species of human being. But circumstances were responsible for this creature. Like the German robber-knight, like the papal dealers in absolutions, the Jewish money-lender, the Shylock, was the product of Christian civilization. Just as little as the Germans were by nature highway robbers, thieves, and murderers, were the Jews born "usurers." With the progress of civilization, with the deliverance from the ecclesiastical yoke, the indulgence tradesmen, the robber-knights, and likewise the Shylocks, disappeared.

What has been said of the Jewish money-lender is true, in fact, of the entire Jewish population. The whole character of the Jews, their habits and traits, their business methods, even their external appearance, are all the products of the conditions surrounding them. The characteristic quality of the Jews, to adapt themselves quickly to the customs and habits of a country, has already been mentioned. They possess a high degree of suggestibility. They are inclined to absorb rapidly the influences brought to bear upon them, the good as well as the bad. Therefore, from the condition in which the Jews are found in a country, a retrospective conclusion can be drawn of the degree of civilization acquired by its people. The Jews form, so to say, the reflected image of the surrounding civilization.

Any one who doubts this statement, or finds it exaggerated, can convince himself daily of its truth. During the last ten years, hundreds of thousands of Jews emi-



grated from Russia to the United States of America. There are nearly a million of these people in New York City alone.

On their arrival in their new home, they are in an almost inconceivably demoralized condition, physically, mentally, and morally. Deprived of all chances of earning a decent living, they were forced to eke out a bare existence by the most miserable usury and the lowest kind of labor. Huddled in miserable, dirty ghettos, they were compelled to live like animals, without ever even hearing of the simplest hygienic arrangements of modern times. In looking at these people, you can imagine yourself having gone backwards hundreds of years. You imagine you have before you a people arisen from the grave, belonging to a far-back epoch, with no idea of all that has been achieved in the world during the last centuries. By the fanatical persecutions, the cruel abuses, and the unjust accusations, to which they were continuously subjected, their character developed all those traits which one is accustomed to find in oppressed and abused people. Distrustful and suspicious, they believe that there is antagonism and treachery in every one and everything around them. Like hunted animals, they are always guarding themselves against attacks and justifying themselves against accusations. Because all sorts of means were used to oppress and abuse them, they stop at nothing to escape from their enemies. It is difficult to imagine a people physically and mentally more degenerate than these Russian Jews.

And still! What miracles does the New World, with its advanced civilization, its equality, its justice and humanity, work on this oppressed people! With a zeal and energy that is really admirable, the younger generation, which is not yet too demoralized to learn, grasps the means here offered to educate itself, to improve its habits and to elevate its ethics. Of course, this can not be accomplished all at once. It will take several generations to eradicate the unpleasant qualities which the abuse of a thousand years created in them. But, finally, human nature will triumph. The younger generations leave the quagmire and dirt, which

imprisoned their forefathers for centuries, farther and farther behind them, until finally they become thoroughly civilized people, who endeavor to excel in all branches of business and in every profession.

Does it require a more obvious proof that the Jews of today owe all they are to the conditions and influence surrounding them? We repeat again that the Jews of a country are the mirror reflecting the degree of culture attained by its people. The degenerate Russian Jews reflect the mediæval barbarism of the present conditions in Russia, while the successful and cultured Jews of the United States represent the product of a noble civilization.

The modern longing for freedom of thought, which received its first great impetus from the French Revolution, and which gradually developed in all civilized countries, endeavored, above all things else, to shake off the yoke of religious constraint. After having gone so far as to separate the Church from the State, and taking from the former all jurisdiction; in other words, after no one could longer be legally forced to practice any particular religion, or be punished for the omission of its rites, after religious faith and its observance were delivered from all constraint, it was hardly possible to make an exception of the Jewish religion. The "emancipation" of the Jews was a logical consequence of the general progress in the domain of personal liberty. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, in all civilized countries—Russia can not, of course, be considered in this class—the Jews enjoy the same rights and privileges accorded to their Christian fellow-citizens. According to the letter of the law, all professions are open to them, they are not excluded legally from the pursuit of any career. And, in spite of this, the so-called "Jewish question" is more intense and burning today than at any former time. One is almost inclined to say that the emancipation of the Jews has made this problem the more difficult.

This subject is so closely connected and so minutely interwoven with the problem of the general progress of civilization, that it seems proper to try to analyze it more thoroughly at this stage of our investigation.

As was expressly emphasized at the beginning of this chapter, the original hatred between Jews and Christians was of a purely religious nature. We have tried to show that the physical and moral degeneration of the Jews was a consequence of this hatred of them by their Christian fellow-citizens. After the Jews, as a result of their environment, of abuse and persecutions, had become what the Christians had made of them, it was only natural that the old hatred should now be transferred also to the product of this hatred; in other words, the Jews were not only hated because of their religion, but one turned in disgust from the dirty ghetto in which the physically and morally degenerated Jews, the result of centuries of privation, huddled together.

Then, when the gates of the ghetto were opened and the Jews were allowed to enter all branches of industry, when they were granted equal legal rights with their Christian fellow-citizens, they evinced a trait of character which is usually considered specifically Jewish, but which is for the most part likewise the result of centuries of oppression. This trait manifests itself by an enormously rapid rise in all branches of human endeavor, so that, in a short time, all professional and industrial branches are filled with Jews, who work their way upwards with immense success. In this phenomenon, one is inclined to perceive an unusual ability on the part of the Jews. But this deduction is erroneous. These conditions can nowhere be better studied than in the United States, and particularly in the City of New York, which, through its international character and the enormous number of Russian-Jewish immigrants to be found there, offers the very best opportunity. The error usually made in forming a psychological opinion of these Jews, lies in comparing them with the proletariat of other countries. In New York there is a large contingent of Italian workmen; there are a great many Irish immigrants; there is a considerable German proletariat; in lesser number there are Frenchmen and Swedes, and finally, considerable settlements of Negroes and Chinamen. Now, it is always stated that of all proletariats the Jews are the only ones who rapidly

work their way upwards. All other nations remain what they were, without being able to show any decided progress. From this the conclusion is drawn that the Jews possess an intellectual superiority. In doing this the following fact is overlooked: The Italian laborers, as well as the laborers of other countries, represent the real proletariat of their home country, and not only this, but, as a rule, they are the dregs of this proletariat. The best workmen surely do not leave their homes, with wife and child, to seek their fortunes in a new world; it is the dregs of the people who do this. They belong to a class which has become the proletariat through a law of Nature. They, as well as their forefathers, had equal chances with their fellow-citizens in the great struggle for existence. Why should they fare better in a strange country, whose language and customs they do not know, than in their own? All that they expect is to find opportunity for manual labor, which offers itself more readily in America than in their over-populated fatherland.

But it is entirely different with the Russian Jews. They are not the natural proletariat of a people like the Italian laborers and the German peasants. They represent a whole population which was forcibly prevented from practicing its natural callings, which was intentionally refused the opportunity to learn, to educate itself. They do not merely seek an opportunity for work, but try to find a home, in which they can freely develop and bring up and educate their children. It is therefore entirely incorrect to compare the Russian Jews intellectually with the proletariat of other nations. They must first classify and assort themselves, before their proletariat can be put on the same plane with that of other peoples.

That the Jews, wherever they have the opportunity, rapidly lift themselves out of the greatest misery and zealously climb up the ladder of human activity, is a fact that has been observed in all places and at all times. As has been shown, this is neither a particular merit nor a sign of higher intelligence, but a process that developed necessarily from existing conditions. On the other hand, the Jews can hardly be reproached for an evil which arises from this

rapid rise, and which is a great misfortune. Ethical and moral development can not possibly keep pace with the rapid advancement in the various domains of earning money, nor even with the higher education and training of the next generation. If we do not mistake, it was John Stuart Mill who said: "It takes three generations to make a gentleman." If we do not entirely agree with this statement, it is only because of the lowness of the number, "three." As a rule it takes more than three generations to produce a "gentleman." With sufficient ability, intellectual education can easily enough be acquired. Children, who grow up in the most miserable environment of a dirty ghetto, can, if they receive proper instruction, learn just as much as the children of the higher classes. But ethical culture, feelings of refinement, as well as habits and manners, can not be learned like a foreign language or mathematics. The child acquires these things from his environment in his home. The impressions there made on the youthful disposition influence his entire life. Their lack can never be compensated, nor can the result of the unfavorable impressions of youth ever be eradicated. Children of degenerate parents may learn ever so much, may win ever so many prizes in school, but they will never be able to strip off the results of the impressions of their youth. Their manners, their habits, often even their way of thinking, betray their low origin; they breathe the air of the ghetto.

A great many prosperous Jews find themselves in this position today; by no means all, but a large number. Wherever the Jew is recognized as such by his manners, his language, his conduct, it is due to these facts. No matter what degree of culture the Jew has attained, no matter how high his social position may be, that which clings to him and singles him out as a Jew can not be stripped off, hard as he may try.

As has been said, it would be unjust to reproach the Jews for this, especially as they can not possibly be held responsible for the impressions of their youth, and as even their forefathers were forced through the faults of others into those miserable conditions, from which the younger

generations must strive to lift themselves. No, they can not be reproached for their lack of manners and their bad habits, but are they less revolting and disgusting for this reason? Can people of refinement be blamed for avoiding social intercourse with people like this? Particularly in the United States, where for decades Russian Jews have flocked by the hundreds of thousands, this condition is especially noticeable. Although the parents themselves are still perfect types of the Russian ghetto, living in dirt and demoralization, they do everything in their power to give their children a good school education and to fit them for something better. The high schools and colleges are crowded with children of this class. On the whole, they are very capable, and are quite often at the head of their classes. When they leave school or college, they become merchants, lawyers, doctors, artists, and are generally successful in the calling they elect. But they carry the stigma of the ghetto on their foreheads. Much as they may have learned in school and colleges, successful as they may be in their later life, their manners, habits, and sentiments plainly betray the atmosphere in which they grew up.

The worst of all this is, that just this very class of Jews has not the slightest inkling of this fact. If Americans refuse to hold social intercourse with them, if they do not wish to mingle with them in summer hotels where a sort of intimacy exists among the guests, if they do not admit them to membership in their clubs and avoid all social contact with them, the Jews consider this a narrow-minded prejudice and complain of unjust treatment, instead of realizing that the aversion to their manners, habits, and ways of speech is perfectly justified. As a fact, Jewish mannerisms can not be more repulsive to the American than they are to the Jews who have sufficient generations of refinement back of them to have finally freed themselves of the last traces of the ghetto.

The aversion to Jewish mannerisms and the disgust for the unrefined character of the Jews is perfectly justified, and the only way in which they can remedy this is in not only giving the coming generations a sufficient school education

and scientific training, but to surround them, from their youth up, with such influences that their manners and habits will lose all traces of offensiveness. For obvious reasons, this is a difficult problem to solve and one which it will take many generations to do. But only by its solution can the Jews expect to overcome eventually the antipathy of their fellow-citizens.

The antipathy that has here been under discussion has absolutely nothing to do with religion, and is, therefore, something quite different from the hatred shown by Christians toward Jews in former times. It is for this reason that the orthodox Jews are much less apt to be affected by this antipathy than are the Jewish Freethinkers, who, for the most part, are not religious at all. For to the latter belongs the educated class, which has just been under discussion, whose ethical development could not keep pace with its scientific education. Orthodox Jews, on the other hand, generally belong to the lower classes. They naturally do not expect social recognition and association with others, not of their class, and consequently have nothing of which to complain. Nobody bothers about their religion. They are left entirely undisturbed in the observance of their rites.

The hatred of the Jews, based on religious fanaticism, started with the priests. They were the ones who incensed the people to acts of violence and abuse of the Jews. The just described antipathy to the manners of the ghetto is purely social. It is based on an æsthetic feeling, and is, therefore, not a matter of principle. Entirely independent of both of these manifestations, religious hatred and antipathy to the bad manners of the Jews, is an agitation which originated at the end of the seventies in the nineteenth century, in Germany, and from thence spread throughout the world.

The rapidity with which the Jews, whenever they got the chance, worked themselves upwards in all branches of industry and in all professions, could not fail to arouse that well-known enemy of success, envy. This is a feeling deeply rooted in the nature of man, one of the main weaknesses innate in the human race. In our time of free com-

petition, in which the incessant struggle for existence must be fought with weapons of the mind, every one seeks new means to force his opponent from the field. In all domains, in all professions, the Jews set up competition with their Christian fellow-citizens—in politics, in journalism, in jurisprudence, in medicine, in all branches of industry and commerce they were to be seen struggling successfully, overcoming the greatest obstacles. Is it, therefore, astonishing that many a person who felt the blows of the sword of his competitors in the struggle for existence too keenly, or even succumbed in the struggle, regretted the emancipation of the Jews and wished back the time when they were locked into ghettos, where their competition was not to be feared? No, indeed not! This sentiment is altogether human and natural. The magnanimity to rejoice over the victory of one's opponent, especially in the struggle for existence, is rarely, if ever, found in man. The effort to keep others out of the field of competition and to prevent them taking part in the great struggle is to be met everywhere. What else were the guilds of the Middle Ages? What else is the object of all the unions of the working classes? The "musical union" of New York does not allow any one who has not been in the country six months to play in an orchestra. The effort to avoid competition is therefore the inevitable result of our modern social conditions.

From this effort sprang that agitation at the end of the seventies. Consequently, it had nothing in common with religious hatred nor social aversion. Neither the Jewish religion nor the manners of the Jews were here in question. The purpose of the agitation was to get rid of an unwelcome and rapidly growing competition. Efforts were directed towards taking from the Jews the legal equalization that had been granted them. How this was to be lawfully accomplished and how far efforts in this direction would go, were at first not even brought into consideration. The thing to be done at first was to instigate a general agitation against the Jews, the rest would follow of its own accord.

Now the question was, on what should this agitation be based? What was the motive to be given for it? It was



impossible to say to the people: We fear the competition of the Jews and we want to get rid of them, therefore you must help to throw them out. This would not do. The matter had to have the appearance of being founded on a good motive. To come back to the Jewish religion was equally impossible. Could one again begin to weep because those terrible Jews had crucified our Lord, Jesus Christ? No, that would not do at all. Likewise, the bad manners of the Jews could not be made the foundation of such an agitation; for what did their manners have to do with business and professional practices? Besides, not all Jews have bad manners. On the contrary, just among those against whom the agitation was to be directed there were enough people who had divested themselves completely of everything that recalled the ghetto, and, besides this, manners can improve with time. So this, too, would not work. It required something new to arouse and affright the world, something like the legend spread by the priests in the Middle Ages, that the Jews poisoned the wells and murdered little children for ritual purposes. Something of this sort was needed, if possible, combined with a new catch-word, for this always helps to produce the desired effect.

Ah! At last the much desired motive hove into view! «Εὐρηκα, Εὐρηκα» was shouted from the pulpit, for the *Deus ex Machina*, the one who made this great discovery, was "Court Chaplain," royal court preacher of the "religion of love," of "Christian love!" The child was born and baptized by the court chaplain himself. Its name was "Anti-Semitism." Here was something entirely new. Not against the "crucifiers of our Savior," not against the bad-mannered children of the ghetto was this modern agitation directed. No, it was against the "race" that this court chaplain strove to engender an ineradicable hatred in the German people. Not against the Jewish religion which gave rise to Christianity did this sly court chaplain direct his attacks, but against the "Semitic race." According to his doctrine, this race exercised the most baleful influence imaginable on all the peoples with which it associated. The ugly, repulsive manners of the Jews were, so he said, not the result of cen-

turies of oppression and malicious exclusion from all civilization, but were the characteristic features of the Semitic race, and could, therefore, never change. The same was true, according to this gentleman, of the before-described inclination of the Jews to "usury" and other hideous traits. The Semitic race, said this preacher of the imperial court, stood anthropologically on a lower plane of development than the "German" race; it was by nature prone to wickedness and crime, and its influence, not to speak of conjugation with it, was exceedingly harmful to all other peoples.

This agitation occurred at the psychological moment. It has been stated that the competition of the Jews was felt in all domains, and that an opportunity to strike a blow at them was eagerly awaited. Therefore modern "anti-semitism" differed from the "Jew baiting" of former centuries in that it was practiced by the better classes, while the laboring class remained utterly indifferent to it. While, more than others, the mob took part in the Jew-baiting for the sake of the booty of the murdered Jews, anti-Semitism flourished in commerce and industry, in official circles, among lawyers and physicians. The expectation that by this agitation the strong Jewish competition would be removed, lent a veritable enthusiasm to anti-semitism. This, however, was not accomplished entirely; this could not possibly be done legitimately. But by strenuous agitating a good deal could be attained in the way of administrative and social relations. Think of the satisfaction an official in any department derived from the knowledge that "such or such a competitor can not achieve as much as I, because he is a Jew; with the same or even less ability I can advance higher because I am not a Jew." Jews were either entirely excluded from all the higher positions in the domain of jurisprudence, in universities, schools and other public institutions, or it was made so difficult for them that the instances where they did succeed in achieving such a career were exceedingly rare. In the same manner the crusade proceeded in the large corporations in commerce and industry. In so far, the agitation of anti-Semitism was very successful, as competition in all professional and business

capacities was made enormously difficult for the Jews and proportionately easier, of course, for non-Jews. This was the purpose of anti-Semitism, and to a certain extent it was attained. Of course, to enjoy the fruits of this agitation permanently, it would be necessary to keep before the people the belief that the Semitic race is actually inferior to other races, and that, above all things, their influence must be avoided. Only in this way could the anti-Semites logically justify the entire exclusion of the Jew from certain professions in some countries, and in others the making of their advancement as difficult as possible. To keep alive this belief, by continuous agitation is the purpose and aim of anti-Semitism.

In trying to make the modern agitation against the Jews a question of race, their enemies had to direct it against the race to which the Jews belong, for to speak of a Jewish race, as such, is an impossibility. This could as little be done as to speak today of a race of Bostonians or a race of New Yorkers. The Jews were a small part of the population of Asia Minor, who, in reference to their race, were called "Semites." The Jews are the only ones of this aggregation of peoples who have been preserved up to the present. All other branches of this great tribe, as well as a large part of the Jews themselves, have mixed with other nations and have been completely absorbed by them.

But from an anthropological viewpoint we cannot speak even of a Semitic "race." Anthropology cannot go beyond the division into seven human races, namely,

- 1 The Caucasian,
- 2 The African (Negroes),
- 3 The Australian (Malayan),
- 4 The American (Indian),
- 5 The Borealeans (Esquimos, *et al.*)
- 6 The Turanians (Tartars, Turks, *et al.*), and
- 7 The Indo-Chinese (Chinese, Japanese).

These seven races differ from one another anthropologically; they offer anatomical variations. If these races do not mix, their characteristic peculiarities continue unaltered, no matter what climatic or educational influences may be

brought to bear upon them. The African negro remains, as to race, what he is, no matter how many generations he may live in America. The negroes may eventually become perfectly civilized and intellectually the equals of their white fellow-citizens, but they will, nevertheless, remain a fundamentally different race from the Americans of the present, so long as they do not intermarry.

This, however, is entirely different regarding the subdivisions of these seven races. Their variations are not based on anthropological but on climatic and educational conditions. The Chinese, Coreans and Japanese belong to the same race, and only by historical development have they become differentiated from one another, just as they can become assimilated by historical events.

The Semites belong to the Caucasian race, which, like the other six, is made up of a large number of tribes, which, however, show no anthropological variations. According to the climate and other conditions of nature and to historical development, these different tribes have acquired different customs and habits, in the course of time. But these belong to the domain of history and not to that of anthropology.

The Semites themselves again were made up of different tribes, upon which external conditions likewise exerted their influence. While the inland tribes, such as the Assyrians and Chaldeans, distinguished themselves by colossal architectural structures, and great deeds of valor in war, the people along the coast, the Phœnicians, established the greatest industries and international commerce of antiquity. The Phœnicians were the Englishmen of their time. Their ships were spread all over the world and formed the bridge on which the nations met. No civilized nation could dispense with intercourse with the Phœnicians; they all needed their goods and were willing to pay well for them. Their natural business ability drew them farther and farther into unknown countries. They had settlements on all the larger islands of the Mediterranean. They discovered the Island of Sicily and there built a number of cities, of which Panormus (now Palermo) has been preserved to the present day.

They pushed their way to the Atlantic Ocean and reached the southern coast of England and the northern coast of France, where they carried on a remunerative trade in amber.

The Semitic tribes, therefore, do not differ even historically from the other branches of the Caucasian race. They went through the same course of development as all other nations. They, too, had their palmy days, during which they were called upon to play one of the most prominent parts in the history of the world, and after which they were doomed to inevitable destruction, and finally were absorbed by other nations. The Jews were the only exception to this last condition; not because of their race, but in consequence of their peculiar religion, Monotheism. The blood of the other Semitic tribes, such as the Phœnicians, mixed with that of other nations, and is, therefore, contained in theirs.

Consequently, the Jews have not maintained themselves as a peculiar race, but as a tribe of the great Caucasian race, to which all the civilized peoples of the West belong. All other nations represent a mixture of all the Caucasian tribes. But the Jews even are not exclusively of Semitic origin, for, in spite of their exclusiveness, they made, during the course of centuries, especially in ancient times, a great many proselytes, not only among their immediate neighbors, but among all the peoples of ancient times, with whom they came in contact through their many migrations. But, still further, not only the other Semitic tribes, like the Phœnicians, became part of other nations, but the Jews themselves, by going over to Christianity, transfused Semitic blood into all European nations.

Originally, all Christians were Jews; Christianity had already attained considerable dimensions when the "heathen" were still not admitted to the new brotherhood. But, in the course of history, the Jews were continually converted to Christianity, so that, as has been stated, certain agents were appointed by the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal to watch lest the "Christi nuovi" observed any Jewish customs or holidays. It has been estimated, that if all the

Jews, from the time of Christ, had remained Jews, instead of 7,000,000, there would be about 100,000,000 to-day. Jewish blood is, therefore, contained in that of all nations, and those who practice anti-Semitism most zealously may, unbeknown to themselves, be of purely Semitic extraction.

In comparing, from a scientific viewpoint, the different tribes of the Caucasian race with one another, no anthropological differences can be found. Culture and education are the only means by which any of the various tribes of a common race can become more refined than others. But, in this respect, the Semites, in consequence of their ancient civilization, are, if anything, on a higher plane than many of the remaining Caucasian tribes. The Slavs were still a crude people without the slightest trace of culture when the Semites had long passed their palmy days.

There can be no question, today, of the existence of pure tribes anywhere in Europe. The Roman Empire itself was a *mixtum compositum* of many different tribes, and later, when the migrations of the people brought those immense hordes from the interior of Asia to the West, the nations became so mixed up and scattered, that every trace of an individual tribe was lost. Not only the Slavs, who constantly pushed their way further west and mingled with the Germans, but far lower elements, such as the Huns and Avarians, mixed their blood with that of the various German tribes.

It is not so long ago that the crudity of these elements was so apparent that the Jews were in their turn proud of their superior extraction, and the ancient culture of their forefathers, and therefore looked down with contempt on the "inferior" human races. Of course, this is just as foolish as the doctrine of the inferiority of the Semitic "race." The Jews had quite as little reason to be proud of their old "aristocracy" as any one today has the right to be proud of being a descendant of the robber-knights of the Middle Ages. Crude and animal-like as the Vandals and the tribes related to them may have been, racially they were just as capable of development as the Semites, and the

Jews had no reason to look down contemptuously on their descendants.

Martin Luther was perfectly right in reproaching the Jews for their pride and saying to them that they were no better than other peoples; that the different nations were equals in the matter of "birth, flesh and blood," the Germans therefore being just as good as the Jews. Luther was unquestionably right in saying: "Therefore I could recount the origin of all of us from Adam and Eve, and after them from Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahaluleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, and Lamech. For they are just as much our grandfathers as those of the Jews and we all are *descendens* from them with the same honors and the same glory. And are just as much their flesh and blood as Abraham with all his issue, for we are all descendants from the same holy fathers, and there is no difference of birth or flesh and blood, as all common sense must show. Therefore, the blind Jews are coarse fools and much worse than the heathen, being proud of their birth before God, though they are in this respect no better than all heathen, because we are both of equal birth, flesh and blood, descendants from the very first, best, and holiest forefathers, and neither one can reproach the other with anything that would not apply to himself just the same."<sup>198</sup>

Luther is perfectly right in saying that "all common sense must show" that there is no difference between the Jews and other peoples, as to "birth or flesh and blood." We quite agree with him that those who believe themselves better than their fellowmen because of their racial superiority are "coarse fools," and that "no one has any right to reproach another." Of course, we would not advise the Jews of today to follow Luther's example and call those who acted contrary to this statement "swine"; for a man must be decent, even if an obvious injustice is done him.

But aside from all anthropological considerations, is it not exceedingly illogical to despise the Jews because of their

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<sup>198</sup>(Von den Jüden und ihren Luegen. Der achte teil und letzte aller Bücher und Schriften des teuren, seligen Mannes Gottes, Doctoris Martini Lutheri, Jhena 1558.)

"race" from a Christian point of view? This contempt is a direct insult to "God," for of all the peoples of the earth, he chose the Jews to whom to reveal himself, whom to make his own people. Of all peoples, it was the Jews whose flesh and blood he chose into which to transform his "only son," and this same flesh and blood, this race, is inferior to all other nations? And this is claimed by those who worship that "Son of God," a Jew, as their Savior? Can a greater contradiction be imagined? The human race to which Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the twelve Apostles, and John the Baptist belonged is so far beneath that race to which the Vandals or the Slavs or even the robber-knights of the Middle Ages belonged?

This, it is true, was not always the prevailing view. The statues on top of the pillars of the two most imposing monuments in Rome, those of the valiant Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Trajan, were removed by order of the holy father of Christianity at that time, and the images of two Semitic apostles were put in their place, a place of honor which they have retained to the present day. Think of it! A Jewish fisherman put in the place of a Roman emperor! A Jewish laborer preferred to one of the most renowned emperors! And these people are inferior to other nations because of their race? If you go through the great art galleries of Europe, you will at once realize that the hundreds of thousands of art treasures of which these collections are composed, treat, almost exclusively, one single subject, the history of the Jewish people. The greatest masters of the most flourishing period of art, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Rembrandt, Murillo, all were devoted to the one object, the reproduction of Jewish history.

What a testimonium paupertatis it would be for our entire modern culture if we had to admit that the civilization of all modern nations, their religion, their philosophy, their art, centered in a people belonging to a race inferior to that of the remaining nations of history!

Anti-Semitism, that is, the agitation against the Jews as a race, is therefore an absurdity. Just as Luther correctly said, it is against all common sense to pride one's



self on one's race, to-day. The various tribes of the Caucasian race have so intermingled that a pure tribe among them can not even be considered, and anthropologically there is no difference between the peoples belonging to the Caucasian race.

In discussing the question of the Jews, these three factors must always be kept apart: The hatred against the Jews for religious reason; anti-Semitism, an agitation against the so-called "Jewish race," and the antipathy against their lack of refinement and good manners, resulting from their confinement in ghettos for hundreds of years. All these factors exist to-day, sometimes singly, sometimes combined.

Hatred against fellow human beings for religious reasons, can, from the viewpoint of our present civilization, be called only the greatest narrow-mindedness. After all that has been said of religion as such, in the foregoing chapters, it is unnecessary, at this point, to demonstrate again the absurdity at the bottom of all religious hatred. If hatred exists today among Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Mohammedans solely on account of their religious belief, those who harbor such hatred deserve only contempt. They thereby prove that either they are hypocrites, or that they still take as their standard the narrow-mindedness of the Middle Ages and have not kept pace with the progress of civilization.

The agitation against the Jews as a race, anti-Semitism, is based on a complete perversion of scientific facts. The Jews are justified in punishing such an attack with the utmost contempt, for the leaders of such an agitation either manifest the utmost ignorance in matters of anthropology and ethnology, or they intentionally sail under false colors for the purpose of accomplishing their purpose.

But, as has been stated, it is a different matter when it comes to the repulsive manners which still cling to most of the Jews. Justice demands that we again emphasize the fact that this moral and ethical demoralization is not the fault of the Jews, but of those who wickedly and brutally robbed them of all means to lead decent lives, who kept them

for centuries in dirt and misery, and refused them every opportunity to share the general civilization. One need only look at the Russian Jew of today, to answer for himself the question why these people are so fundamentally different from all the other Jews in the world.

Reproaches for this state of affairs can be justly made to neither the Jews of today nor their forefathers. They are what their more powerful enemies have made them. But all this does not alter existing facts. All this does not make the bad manners of the Jews less repulsive. Besides, the other side has an equal right to justice. If, on the one hand, it be true that the present Jews are not responsible for their ill-breeding, it is, on the other hand, no less true that the American is just as little to be blamed for the demoralization of the Russian Jews and the insufferable ill-breeding of those who in a short time work themselves up to a position of affluence and ease. Therefore, can the American be blamed for refusing to hold social intercourse with these people, or for insisting that his children shall not acquire bad manners by association with Jewish children in school?

That in which the successful Jews in America entirely fail is recognition of this important fact. The Jewish business man who, in the winter, lives in his luxurious home, keeps his automobile, attends the opera and concerts, is indignant when in the spring he receives prospectuses from summer hotels in which it is stated: "We don't take Hebrews." He complains about the "unheard of prejudices against the Jews in this free country, America," where all people are supposed to be equals. He abuses the country and its people; in fact, he does everything except the one thing that he ought to do, and that is, realize that his manners, his speech, his habits, all have that specifically Jewish character which is the inherited remainder of the ancestral ghetto, and which is so repulsive to people of culture and refinement. The solution of the Jewish question lies in the removal of this evil.

We have attempted to demonstrate wherein the difficulty of this problem lies, and that it will take generations

to solve it. The first step towards solving it is self-cognition, exactly the thing which the Jews totally lack. They usually see only the difference between themselves and the Jews beneath them; that the stigmata of the ghetto still clings to them too, they do not know. This lack of self-cognition is the greatest obstacle to their further development.

But in many respects Jewish women are worse than the men. If they only knew that the jargon and the manners of the ghetto are ten thousand times more disgusting when it is sought to conceal them behind silken gowns, diamonds, and pearls! Here is, indeed, a great field for philanthropic activity—to arouse in these people proper self-cognition and modesty.

Those Jews who have at last succeeded in completely freeing themselves from those hereditary features of the ghetto, who have become true "gentlemen" and "gentlewomen," are in a pathetic situation. Those bad "Jewish" manners are, for palpable reasons, even more repulsive to them than to others. Nevertheless, they are placed in the same great category of "Hebrews," so that they stand between Scylla and Charybdis, suffering from a painful repulsiveness on the one side, and an unconquerable prejudice on the other. Let us hope that this circumstance, too, may act as a spur to the Jews to continue to strive for their further ethical development, and, above all things else, to bring to them the realization that the so-called Jewish question, like so many other social problems, can find its solution only in the ennobling and refining of mankind.

## CONCLUSION.

From the foregoing investigations we arrive at the following conclusions:

All religions originate in the naïve question of crude, uncivilized nations: "Who created the world?" Just as our cognition of the phenomena of Nature surrounding us is dependent on the quality and mechanism of our organs of sense; just as, in other words, the world is only a product of our cerebral action, so the law of causality is also a phenomenon dependent on the mechanism of our brain. Because all external processes are perceived by our brain in such a manner that every process seems to be the result of the previous and the cause of the following one, the law of causality appears to us an absolute truth, ordained by Nature itself, while, as a fact, this law, like all our conceptions, is only a product of our cerebral activity. The question: Who created the world? is, therefore, not only unscientific, but naïve and childish, and consequently the answer to it must also prove deficient. The invention of supernatural beings who, dwelling in the unknown realms of the blue vaults of heaven, governed the world, is the naïve answer to this innocent question. The doctrine of the Gods was to the infancy of nations what fairy tales are to the children of man. As the adult smilingly looks back upon his childhood, when he was thoroughly convinced of the truth of the fairy tales told by the mother, when he looked with ardent admiration upon the good fairy who led the valiant hero safely through all dangers, when, with fear and trembling he perceived the activities of goblins and dwarfs, when, in childish fright, he clung to his mother, startled by the voice of the wizard, so, from our present vantage ground of advanced civilization, we look back upon those times when the people bent on their knees before the gods, when they sacrificed bulls

and rams, when they hoped that their immortal souls would eventually dwell in a heavenly kingdom, when they were filled with fear and terror at the thought of the terrible tortures that were in store for the wicked, in purgatory and hell. Religion, no matter what its nature, whether Jupiter, Wotan, or Jehovah sit on the divine throne, is the product of naïve human nature, the nursery-tale on which modern science looks down with condescending smiles.

While the doctrine of the gods of the ancient peoples around the Mediterranean Sea was the product of symbolical poetry, which in Homer had the noblest and most inspired interpreter, the doctrine of Monotheism had to be traced back to an entirely different origin. We think we have proved beyond doubt that the so-called "revelations of God" are based on hallucinations; that all the ancient Hebrews, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are supposed to have held personal intercourse with God, suffered from a mental disease which is unquestionably as old as mankind, but which has been recognized as a disease only during the last hundred years, namely, paranoia.

While the "heathen" doctrine of the gods could be substantiated only by the writings of the poets, nobody ever having heard or seen the gods, the doctrine of Monotheism was supported by a number of persons who had actually heard the voice of God with their own ears. Nobody could possibly think that he was dealing with intentional deception in these cases. For their absolute belief in the reality of their delusions lends such an appearance of truth to the statements of paranoiacs, that these people were never at any time of history considered impostors. Any one familiar with mental diseases who reads the many histories of "Saints," particularly of those who had direct intercourse with angels or with Jesus Christ, will at once recognize paranoia. It is particularly interesting to note the investigation and the final judgment of the priests as to the question whether the statements of the "Saints" were true, whether the angels really had appeared to them, as they claimed, or whether they were trying to deceive. Wherever there was a case of paranoia at the bottom of the story, the

priests were always convinced of the absolute veracity of those in question; they always reported that there could be no question of falsehood, and that therefore the person to whom God had sent his messenger must be a real Saint. The sincerity and truthfulness, on the part of paranoiacs, is so patent that the most experienced psychiatrist could not simulate paranoia for any length of time.

This is the circumstance which gave the doctrine of Monotheism its enormous success. Here were absolutely trustworthy persons, whose statements no one would ever doubt, who held direct intercourse with God, to whom God, in person, spoke, and to whom he continually gave his commands. These persons actually heard "God's voice," and that, too, with the same distinctness with which we hear our own voices. How, then, could there be even a momentary doubt of the actual existence of God?

In view of the enormous importance of the proof that these confidants of God, the patriarchs and prophets, really were paranoiacs, the main features of paranoia may be pointed out once more.

Paranoia is a mental disease, characterized by delusions and hallucinations, which need not necessarily affect in any way the intelligence of the person suffering from it. On the contrary, in spite of their mental disturbance, they may be highly intelligent individuals. The disease having been recognized as such only about a hundred years ago, but paranoiacs having existed for thousands of years, hallucinations and delusions must, in former times, have been considered something else than symptoms of disease. As a rule, they were looked upon as mysterious occurrences; manifestations of the gods, spirits, witches, and devils. Paranoiacs, therefore, must always have created a great sensation among their contemporaries. Nevertheless, history gives us no descriptions which we might take for those of paranoia except those cases which we have described and others similar to them.

The description given in the Bible of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Moses, as well as of the prophets and Jesus Christ, corresponds in every respect with the cases of para-

noiaes which we have opportunity to observe daily, at present. The delusions and hallucinations are, in fact, so characteristic, that the experienced psychiatrist could not invent more typical cases of paranoia than these men, described in the Bible.

Furthermore, the assumption of paranoia offers the only plausible explanation of the Biblical phenomena in question. All other attempts to explain those wonderful occurrences must certainly appear exceedingly far-fetched. Some speak of a Jewish mythology, others want to see allegorical poetical creations in them, and still others do what is always most convenient, when one is confronted by difficult problems, simply deny the occurrences altogether.

The only reason for refusing to accept our explanation of those miraculous occurrences would be the natural horror that such realization must necessarily produce. It is, indeed, pathetic to be compelled to admit that for two thousand years mankind has made the morbid manifestations of some insane Jews the object of admiration and worship. This is a tragic fate, more tragic than anything else that has ever befallen mankind. For thousands of years the adherents of this doctrine have been accustomed to look down with pity and contempt on the "heathen," and now they are to learn that those "heathen" worshiped the epical creations of their poets, while their "eternal God" was the product of a mental disease, and his "only Son" was an insane Jew. It is almost superhuman to make such an admission, and we can not be astonished if mankind cries out with a thousand voices: No, no, I will not believe it—no matter what proofs are brought, I will not believe it—it can not be so, it dare not!

It is only human, quite human to think thus. Not only to destroy the highest ideal of mankind, but to desecrate it so horribly! What an awful fate!—and yet—dare science hesitate to break the shell and lay bare the naked, cold truth? Dare science, for sentimental reasons, allow itself to be prevented from performing its duty? Art with its glowing creations of the imagination may kindle the human heart; but science remains cold and pitiless, irresistibly

striving ahead towards the one eternal goal, dispelling the somber clouds, lifting the heavy veil, that it may cast its golden rays over all the world—that one eternal goal—the truth.

Loyal to its sacred duty, science has forged ahead, step by step. It has exterminated one superstition after another, discredited one erroneous hypothesis after the other. That many ideals grown dear to mankind have been overthrown thereby, can not be denied. Pitilessly the gods were dethroned, no matter what their name or origin. At last the turn came to Jehovah. Science, here too, had to apply the cruel scalpel and pitilessly cut out what is not based on truth. And what consolation can it offer? Is it able to provide a substitute for the ideals thus destroyed? Quiet, acquiescent resignation! This is all that science has to offer in place of the phantastic doctrines of supernatural beings. A sad consolation, in truth, for the rapt idealist. From the ruins of the overthrown altars of the gods, from the heap of rubbish of broken down fairy tales, arises the unpretending structure of modern science, which, simple as it is, still carries its head proudly, for the foundation on which it is erected is—the truth. In the place of religious ideas about the Deity and philosophical hypotheses, has arisen the clear knowledge that the infinitesimal creature, man, with his inadequate organs of sense, can never grasp the true nature of the infinite. Modern science has perceptibly extended the wise saying of the greatest of all Athenians: "I know that I know nothing." We know more than this today. We know that we never will know anything, never can know anything. Recognition of this truth is of the very greatest importance. We know that our conception of the world is confined to our weak organs of sense; but that their power, increased a thousand fold, would not enable us to recognize the true nature of the universe. We must, therefore, not invent childish naïve nursery-tales about the "creation" of the world and its "purpose," but must, in dignified resignation, admit our own nothingness and try to realize the modest limitations of our cognition. We will, then, the more eagerly forge ahead in the domain



that is within our limits. Instead of wasting our weak resources in trying to solve problems which are beyond what is attainable by us, we will with untiring strength enrich science with things which are within the scope of our weak capabilities.

It is true that many an ideal is destroyed by this realization. "Eternal salvation" and everything connected with it vanishes like an empty dream. No life after death, no reunion with dear departed ones, no heavenly kingdom with its beautiful angels, no Savior, no Redeemer! But the world is freed from a superstition which has held mankind in fetters for thousands of years. Mankind is liberated from the unspeakable suffering and misery which resulted from this superstition. No more trials for witchcraft, no religious persecutions, nor fears of the eternal tortures of hell, threaten the peace and happiness of the people of to-day.

We have, furthermore, tried to prove in the foregoing chapters that religion has always been a great evil, nay, a curse to mankind. No other factor in the history of human development, no vices, no passions, no wars, no revolutions" have inflicted such deep wounds on mankind as has religion. And of all religious doctrines, Christianity raged most cruelly and destructively among the people. It is not saying too much to state that civilization has been retarded in its development for fully a thousand years by the Christian religion. To forcibly keep mankind in a state of ignorance, stupidity, and superstition was one of its most important tasks. Hundreds of thousands of human beings were burned alive, in the name and in honor of "our Lord, Jesus Christ." For centuries Europe was illuminated by the flames of the stake, in which innocent men and women became the victims of religious fanaticism.

And then came the Reformation, with its Evangelical doctrine of faith. Even today, in Evangelical countries, this "Reformation" is proclaimed as a "reform" in the true sense of the word in the domain of religion, bringing about a great advance in civilization. But the fact is, that the Evangelical doctrine was far more orthodox than the Cath-

olic, that it clung to the letter of the Gospel and strictly prohibited all independent expressions of opinion. The great "Reformers" all favored the severest punishment of heretics. In this sense, Luther expressly gives his views in his reply to Philip of Hesse as well as to the ecclesiastics of Wittenberg. In the same strain, Calvin, Beza, and Jurien likewise wrote books on the justification of the persecution of heretics. When Calvin had the unfortunate Servetus burned at the stake, because of his religious views, which, according to our ideas, were certainly orthodox enough, he won the approval of all Protestant sects. Melancthon, Bullinger, and Farel, sent special letters, in which they expressed their full approval.

The intolerance of the Protestants had no limits. Very shortly after its beginning, Protestantism became divided into a large number of different sects, every one of which claimed to be the only one in possession of the "absolute eternal truth," showering its curses and maledictions on all of Christendom that dared to contradict this or that dogmatic precept. But it did not end with curses and threats. The fires of the stakes of the Protestants blazed no less fiercely than those of the Catholics. Streams of blood of "religious criminals" flowed through the Protestant countries. In the name of religion the country was deluged with blood, every trace of patriotism was destroyed, foreigners being called upon to assist in the slaughter of one's own countrymen, rejoicing after such a victory over the dire need and distress of the fatherland. And when finally everything had been brought into subjection, when every other opinion had been extirpated by fire and iron, a religious tyranny was erected on the ruins of the destroyed faith which was more cruel and brutal than that of a Nero.

The religious wars which were carried on until recent years were the most cruel and devastating struggles to be found in history. And yet they appear in a mild light compared with the wholesale slaughters, such as Bartholomew's Eve, which were perpetrated in the name of religion. To remind you of all the cruelties and crimes which were committed in the world in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ,

one would have to fill thousands of volumes. In the foregoing chapters only a few things have been mentioned, to serve as examples of what mankind has had to endure because of religion, and especially because of Christianity.

In spite of all this, people continue to proclaim that our present civilization is the product of Christianity. At every opportunity "Christian civilization" is praised and celebrated for having won the great victory over barbarism, for having made mankind mild, unselfish and noble. Missionaries are still sent to foreign countries to convert the "heathen" to the faith in the Messiah, in Jesus Christ, through whom alone eternal salvation can be attained. All this is, still taught to children in school; they are impressed with the belief that Christianity is the pillar of modern civilization, and that without it we would still today be in a state of crude barbarism.

And all this is the greatest falsehood that can be imagined. Exactly the opposite of all this is true. Human beings first began to lay claim to civilization when they freed themselves from the fetters of Christianity. Christianity was the greatest hindrance, the most persistent obstacle that civilization had to overcome. Christianity kept mankind in ignorance, stupidity, and superstition, and for more than a thousand years made every advance in civilization an utter impossibility.

This is the true state of affairs, and to recognize it as such is the first duty of civilization. So long as children in school are taught those falsehoods, so long as we continue to delude ourselves, there can be no real civilization. Knowledge of one's self is the fundamental requirement for further development and progress, instead of a continual encouragement of self-deception and hypocrisy. What do you think of a government which sends Christian missionaries to the Chinese, to carry out the command of the Savior, to spread his doctrine and the faith in him throughout the world; but which government at the same time speaks at home of the great danger of the yellow race, and calls upon the nations to form an alliance against this "race"? Does not the very sending of missionaries now-a-days seem

utterly ridiculous? In other words, that in the present state of science, we should send people to the Chinese, who have a far older culture than any we can boast, who were a civilized nation when in Europe people were still being burned at the stake, if they refused to take claret for real blood and bread for actual human flesh—to say to them about as follows: There is only one God in this universe, and whoever does not believe in this God is a heathen and will be eternally damned. This only God has a Son, who two thousand years ago was an ordinary Jewish carpenter, but who now sits on a throne in heaven and rules the world. If you believe this story, this Jewish Son of God will take upon himself all the sins which you have committed, and after death those of you who believe in him will go to heaven. But if you do not believe this, you will be thrust into a terribly hot place, called hell, where you will be tortured for all eternity. Besides the “only” God and his Son, there is a “Holy Ghost.” But these three persons, the only, eternal God, his Jewish Son and the Holy Ghost, taken together, form only one, for in spite of these three Deities there is only one God. If you stupid Chinamen do not understand this, the fault lies in your yellow race. But alas! you do not need to understand it anyway; all you have to do is to believe, for it is faith that brings you “salvation.” This is the doctrine of Christianity. Will you be astonished to hear that the Chinese were convulsed with laughter on hearing these sermons. Or that they lost patience and threw the missionaries out of their country, neck and crop?

No matter what form religion took, it has always been an evil; it either kept mankind ignorant and stupid, or made them hypocrites. And today it is just as it was in former times. Religion is less an evil today, not because it is on a higher plane, but because it has been denuded of its power. Civilization, not religion, is responsible for the fact that human beings are no longer persecuted and tortured because of their faith. Religion of the present is like a poisonous hydra, whose venomous tooth has been drawn by civilization. But why let this hydra live at all? Only

after all mystical belief in a "God" has followed in the path of the old sacrificial altars of ancient nations, only after mankind has entirely freed itself from all inherited superstition, can there be real civilization.

The attempt to "modernize" religion, that is to make the religious doctrine fit our present scientific views, must appear an absolute impossibility to every one who has followed this discourse. Instead of making the content of the system of religion more plausible by so-called "reform," such attempts only increase its many contradictions. It is again a sad alternative with which the followers of "reformed" (in the modern sense) religions are confronted—immense thoughtlessness or hypocrisy.

Jewish "free-thinkers" look down with a certain contempt on their orthodox co-religionists, and imagine that they have attained a higher degree of culture through their reformed Judaism. Practically, this "reform" consists of dropping all ritual ceremonies and not permitting themselves to be disturbed in their daily routine of life by religion. But they still belong to a congregation, they "believe in God," and go to temple two or three times a year, on the occasion of their "high holidays." At weddings and funerals the rabbi of a "reformed" congregation must make a speech, and this is the extent of the religious manifestations of "free-thinking" Jews.

But if one examines the logic at the bottom of this reform, we find it really pitiable. The question whether there is a God can logically depend only on whether the occurrences described in the Bible, in which God is supposed to have "revealed" himself, are true or not. If I believe in those revelations, I naturally believe in God. But if I do not believe in them, the belief in God has absolutely no foundation. These so-called "revelations" are the only proof of the existence of God. To deny them and still believe in God is absolutely illogical and senseless.

But if you accept these occurrences as true, if you believe in the actual revelation of God to the patriarchs and prophets, and if, therefore, you believe in the existence of a personal God, by what right can you arbitrarily pick out

one thing and say: These laws I will "observe," but those not? By what right can you ignore any of the commands given by God? If I believe that God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai and there gave him laws, can I, logically, make a selection and say: this I will respect, but that I consider unnecessary?

For him who has the slightest appreciation of logic, there can be only one alternative: Either I believe or I do not believe. Therefore, only orthodox believers or infidels are logically justified. A compromise with Jehovah to "observe" his high holidays but to leave the others unnoticed, to select certain ritual ceremonies and to ignore the rest, is altogether ridiculous.

The same holds good of "modernized" Christian congregations. It is no longer a rare occurrence to hear from the pulpit that Christ was not "the Son of God," but only a human being, "an extraordinarily noble, good, and wise man."

Without the divinity of Christ there can be no Christianity. Belief in Christ as a God forms the difference between Christianity and Judaism. To deny the divinity of Christ and still to call one's self a "Christian" is an absurd contradiction. The whole doctrine of Christ centers in the belief in his divinity. Every one of his utterances refers to himself and "his Father" in heaven, who sent him to deliver mankind from their sins. Whoever today disowns the divinity of Christ, puts himself on the same ground taken by the educated Jewish contemporaries of Christ, and in consequence of which their descendants have been and are despised up to the present. The crucifixion of Christ was but a logical result of this disbelief, in consequence of which Christ had to be declared an impostor and his doctrine blasphemy. That the scientifically educated Christian, even though he believes in the existence of a personal God, can not persuade himself to recognize a person who lived two thousand years ago as the Son of God, is quite natural. But if one is of this opinion, one ought to be honest and just enough to draw the natural consequences therefrom. Above all, one should then admit that the Jewish priests and doc-

tors of that time were right when they became indignant over the presumptions of Christ; one should be sincere enough to admit that had one been in their place, one would have acted exactly as they did and not like the rabble who did worship Christ as a God. Furthermore, one ought to admit that from the very beginning the Christian doctrine was built upon an error, and that those who opposed it were in the right.

Such a person would at least act honestly and decently. But, on the one hand to disown the divinity of Christ, and on the other to uphold Christianity with all its consequences, can be regarded only either as utter thoughtlessness or the most despicable hypocrisy.

How is it possible that any one who is willing to judge honestly can regard Christ as a "wise, noble, and ingenuous" man? The whole doctrine of Christ can be summed up in the words: "I, Jesus Christ, am your God. If you believe in me, I will deliver you of your sins, and after death you will go to heaven. If you do not believe in me you will go to hell, there to be accursed for all eternity." The entire doctrine, the whole life of Christ, concentrates into this sentence. And that is supposed to be profound wisdom and unselfish magnanimity! Whoever knows the Gospel and considers Christ "a wise man," can not himself be overburdened with wisdom. Whoever disowns the divinity of Christ, can see in him only an impostor or an insane person. The first is absolutely out of the question and the diagnosis of his insanity, therefore, established beyond a doubt.

We must, therefore, emphasize the fact that so-called "modernized" religious doctrines are far more illogical and contradictory than the old orthodox faith. "Reformed Judaism" and "liberal Christianity" are based—hard as this may sound—on thoughtlessness or hypocrisy. "Faith," which means the acknowledgment of things which we can neither perceive with our organs of sense nor recognize by logical conclusions and deductions, is unworthy of our modern civilization. There can be no difference for us between faith and superstition. Just as justifiably as I believe in "God," I can also believe in devils, witches, ghosts, spirits,

and all other possible creations of the imagination. There is no logical difference between them. We have demonstrated that religions owe their origin to the simplicity and ignorance of primitive peoples and play the same role in the historical development of mankind that fairy-tales play in the lives of individual human beings. The old saying that mankind "is not yet ripe enough" to exist without religion, is absurd. If civilized nations of today are not ripe enough to live without nursery tales, they never will be. But they are "ripe enough." Mankind of today needs no fairy-stories to continue the further development of civilization.

But assuming that mankind does need some kind of "moral support"—has religion ever acted as such? Have we not in the foregoing chapters sufficiently demonstrated that religious faith has always been the very opposite? Religion never made mankind "good" and "noble"; but it did produce fanatical monsters or turned human beings into abominable hypocrites.

Just recall the picture drawn of the life of Martin Luther. From our present viewpoint of morality, we would actually have to despise Luther, and look down with contempt on the wickedness of his actions. And still, Luther's character was not so bad originally. He became what he was through his religious faith. His actions, severely as we must condemn them today, are justified, if we recognize the religious doctrine by which they were prompted.

What we need today is not men who abstain from doing wrong through superstitious fear, nor those who give large sums of money to the poor because they hope to be rewarded with a good seat in heaven, but men whose characters are by nature and education so formed that they love good and hate evil as such. So long as fear of punishment and hope of reward are the incentives to human actions there can be no question of real civilization. Therefore, why maintain an institution which is not only of no value for mankind but has always spread misery? Modern science has overthrown the whole doctrine of a divine being and exposed the true nature of this pernicious superstition. History, as well as daily observation, shows that morally reli-



gion has always done harm and not good. Why, therefore, try again and again to "modernize" religion so as to make it fit present conditions instead of freeing ourselves once and forever from this evil handed down from generation to generation? If religion contained an "eternal truth," human affairs would have to subordinate themselves to this truth, instead of which civilization must take religion in hand and make it fit present requirements.

Just think of what even today the people of various countries are told about what is supposed to happen "in the name of God" or "in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ." Not more than fifty years ago the Southern states offered a prize for the best work in which slavery was proven to be an institution established by God. And what a race was run by the priests to win this prize! Nevertheless, our school children are told the old twaddle that it was Christianity which abolished slavery.

That which is our highest ideal of morality today is diametrically opposed to the actions resultant from religious faith. Modern ethical teachers preach—and with perfect right—altruism. To live and die for others is the purpose of an ideal life. To find one's greatest happiness in making others happy is the only thing that can make life worth living. An altruist is absorbed in the sufferings of his fellow-men and the effort to help and benefit them. One's own unhappiness fades in sympathy with the misfortunes of others, and true happiness is found in rejoicing in the happiness of others. But what are the thoughts of an orthodox religious person? Getting his little soul into heaven is the sole object and purpose of his life. What were those "saints" who withdrew from all mankind and spent their days in idle prayers, other than egotists in the highest sense of the word? Of what benefit to mankind were all the "saintly" men and women who spent their lives in "fear of God" and "piety" in monasteries? Religion which constantly prates of salvation, which teaches that "penance" wins forgiveness for "sins" and opens the gate of the kingdom of heaven, creates the greatest egoism in man, and does exactly the contrary of

what, according to our present ethical ideas, a doctrine of morality should do.

The abolition of religious constraint was the first great achievement of civilization in the domain of religion. It seems to us today an act of the most brutal barbarism to try to force people to adopt any religious faith and to torture and put them to death in case they resist. Since, of course, no one can be forced to believe, people were forced to pretend to believe. In other words, with torture and fagot, they were made hypocrites. The abolition of these atrocities was the first great step; it gave man religious freedom.

The second great step is yet to come. It will consist in the complete abolition of religion. It is not sufficient to abolish the compulsion to superstition; superstition should not be taught at all any longer. Religion is a remainder of barbarism. That well-known argument, that belief in God must be based on truth because all primitive peoples had a religion, is illogical and absurd. All primitive nations also tried to mutually destroy one another by wars; and shall civilization for this reason give up the attempt to abolish war from the face of the earth? Human beings in their primitive condition have many qualities in common, which to abolish is the task set for civilization. Religious superstition is one of these qualities. Just as the child stretches out its little hands for the moon, thereby manifesting its infantile conception of the world, so primitive nations have their naïve conception of the gods and the creation of the world. But mankind that has been ripened by civilization must bid good-by to those fairy-tales and let serious science take their place.

If we consider that, in spite of the advanced age at which the human race has arrived, it is only a few centuries since human beings were still burned alive at the stake because of their faith, the demand to abolish religion altogether may seem a little premature. But the progress made by civilization within only the last few centuries is such that this demand is fully justified. This step must and will come; it is only a question of time; therefore, why not rather today than tomorrow?

Just picture to yourself the conditions that would result from such a step—with one blow all countries would come into possession of immeasurable means for realizing the most ideal and far-reaching charitable problems. The fortunes that are represented by the churches and all that belongs to them, all over the world, are actually inconceivable. And who would miss these? The people? Never. Instead of superstition and fairy-tales the people would be taught useful things. Or the priests? The entire priesthood of all religions? Well, and suppose they would miss them! Religion should not exist—at least, theoretically—for the sake of the priests, but the priests are here to carry on its work. But they too would be compensated.

Those who advocate the abolition of religion are by no means merely desirous to destroy. No, indeed. Human happiness does not lie in destroying, but in building up new ideals. From the ruins of the old decayed superstition a new proud edifice shall arise, a new moral doctrine, a new code of ethics, a true altruism. Instead of preaching to the people every Sunday about the insane Jews of ancient times, let them listen to popular scientific lectures which will be of use and profit to them. Instead of continuing to make the people worship a number of insane Jews of antiquity, as divine, and teaching them at the same time to despise the descendants of these same divine Jews as an inferior "race," let their minds be trained and educated so that they may learn to love their fellowmen, a thing that Christianity theoretically preaches but never practices.

What an endless perspective of the highest ideals opens up before us at the thought that the immeasurable horde of priests, instead of reading idle masses, instead of preaching tiresome sermons on some utterance of Christ, shall bend all their energies to the realization of that noble ideal, the ethical education of man, the doctrine of altruism! And this new ethical structure need by no means be confined only to theoretical doctrines. An abundance of work is to be found in the wide field of charity, and in the education of the people. What an enormous progress of civilization would it be if the Jesuits, instead of carrying out their ego-

istical purposes by the most vicious means, would become sincere friends of the people. And what is true of the Jesuits, is true of all the priests of all religions. Away with superstition—away with the impotent doctrine of a "God" which is grossly contradicted by all the facts of modern science. Let love for one's fellowmen and care for their welfare flourish and prosper.

But who will be the valiant hero to slay the monster with his good sword, to free the world from its inherited superstition? May be it will languish and slowly bleed to death from the wounds inflicted by the ceaseless turn of the wheel of time. This will pitilessly press its teeth into its flanks, for no one dares to grasp the spokes of the wheel and bring it to a standstill. But what a debt of gratitude would the world owe a valiant hero, who, with one blow, should accomplish what time can achieve only slowly and with great pain. A strong and powerful hero he would have to be, a prince, a king, an emperor—who can say what the future might bring? Could such a hero be found, he would surely win a far more beautiful laurel than crowned the head of the most powerful conquerors of the earth. The most beautiful, splendid deed which a prince could perform, would be to free the world from its old, evil superstition, to hoist the banner of truth and to found a new ethical doctrine, which, instead of concentrating itself upon the welfare of each one's own little soul, would carry at heart the welfare of mankind.

The struggle for existence will continue, for it is the incentive of all progress and culture; but it would continue in a different form from what it is today. The original form of this struggle, in which physical strength overpowers the weaker, and robs him of his possessions, disappeared long ago. Civilization has ennobled this phenomenon of Nature too. The struggle for existence has become, through civilization, a struggle of minds. But the greater the advance of civilization, the more are the weak, who succumb in the struggle, cared for by the commonwealth. In no modern civilized community need any one die of starvation because he is unable to earn a living.

But at present we are still on the lowest rung of this care for the common good of the people. The individual still considers this a burden, even though lightened by a feeling of moral obligation. But conditions will be quite different in the future. The "struggle for existence," which today really no longer deserves this appellation, but could be called at best the "struggle for success," will in the future assume an entirely different form. It will be a struggle in which individuals compete for the honor of having the privilege of serving mankind. The one who does his fellowmen the greatest service will be the victor in this battle. Human thoughts and endeavors will no longer be concentrated on personal success or on the salvation of each little soul, but on the welfare of mankind.

Religion is incapable of producing such men; it has always done exactly the contrary. The doctrine of salvation after death, fear of punishment and hope of reward, the concept of "sin," foolish praying, above all else, faith in supernatural things and the assumption that faith is a virtue and disbelief a vice—all these can not produce human beings with true and noble sentiments, human beings such as are needed to carry out the ideals here described.

That it is possible to create genuine altruistic feelings in man by education and habit, is proven by the deeply rooted religious faith itself. If inheritance and education can make a foolish superstition the second nature of man, why should the same not be possible of a truly noble feeling that would enhance the welfare of all mankind?

The world is continually forging ahead and is, therefore, subject to constant change. What form social-political conditions will assume in the future no one can predict. It lies beyond the scope of this present work to give even an opinion on the subject. But no matter what its nature may be, no matter what form the social mechanism of the coming generations may assume, those exalted sentiments of mankind will be the incentive to the further development of civilization. From the ruins of religious superstition, a scientific, ethical doctrine will arise, which will endeavor to develop the noblest traits of man. Mankind will look back with con-

tempt on the superstition which enslaved it for thousands of years. Human beings will thenceforth be free. There will be no more Jews nor Christians, but—human beings, genuine human beings. The doctrine, “love thy neighbor as thyself,” will not, as heretofore, only be preached, but will be practiced by all mankind.



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<div>MAR 8 1946</div> <div>MAR 2 1946</div>	<div>S. Allen Martin</div> <div>6019 Kenwood</div>
<div>OCT 11 1946</div>	<div>S. Smulikoff</div>
<div>OCT 25 1946</div>	<div>Kelly R. R.</div>
<div>MAR 6 1963</div>	<div>K. W. Coldridge</div>
<div>MAR 25 1963</div>	<div>5539 Kimbark</div>
<div>MAR 25 1963</div>	<div>RENEWED</div>
<div>APR 8 1963</div>	
<div>APR 8 1963</div>	
<div>APR 22 1963</div>	<div>RENEWED</div>
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MAR 6 1963	<i>R. Woodbridge</i>
MAR 25 1963	RENEWED APR 8 1963
APR 8 1963	RENEWED APR 22 1963
APR 22 1963	RENEWED MAY 13 1963
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	<i>J. Epstein</i>
FEB 10 1966	<i>Epstein 207</i>
MAY 27 1969	<i>S. Guriyda</i>

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